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ABSTRACT

The Mutual Aid Project (MAP) has developed a community organizing and planning approach which has focused its attention on the continuing role of older people within their neighborhoods. This approach has sought to strengthen not only the day-to-day arrangements for mutual aid and support, but also those actions which will assist groups in obtaining adequate resources, skills, and knowledge from the formal service system. This handbook reflects the state of the art of voluntary projects which will assist older people in playing a major role in community life. At the same time, it consistently portrays the dignity and competence of older individuals in strong contrast to most age stereotypes. The purpose of the handbook is to provide some ideas concerning the kinds of projects that can be conducted both for and with older neighborhood residents for the common good. Topics covered in the handbook's six chapters include: planning for neighborhood projects; self-protection projects; projects for the homebound; consumer education projects; cooperative and exchange projects; and urban gardening. Appendix 1 provides basic information about social assistance programs of the federal government and New York City, as well as information about discounts, cultural events, and employment in the New York City area. Appendix 2 provides important phone numbers (such as police, fire, welfare, gas company, legal assistance, etc.) for the New York City area. (KC)

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the older person's handbook

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Ideas, Projects and Resources for Neighborhood Action

by Michael Cala
with Susan Lob and Marian Sroge

A Mutual Aid Project Handbook

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The first forty years of life give us the text, the next thirty supply the commentary

Schopenhauer

Photo by Michael Cala

Written and edited by Michael Cala
Compiled by Susan Lob and Marian Sroge
Editorial consultant: Anne Fanciullo

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Cover design by Vincent J. Mielcarek
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"There was no culturally defined way for me to 'relate' to old people, except the rules of courtesy which applied to all adults. My grandparents were an integral and important part of the family and of the community. I sometimes have a dreadful fear that mine will be the last generation to know old people as friends, to have a sense of what growing old means, to respect and understand man's mortality and his courage in the face of death."
—Sharon R. Curtin,
from *Nobody Ever Died of Old Age*

Michael Cala

Preface

Over the past two years, the Mutual Aid Project (MAP) has developed a community organizing and planning approach which has focused its attention on the continuing role of older people within the overall life and development of their neighborhoods. This approach has sought to strengthen not only the day-to-day arrangements for mutual aid and support, but also those actions which will assist groups in obtaining adequate resources, skills and knowledge from the formal service system.

As a part of this work, we have been particularly interested in the kinds of projects and neighborhood activities which will enable older people and their friends and neighbors of all ages to break out of their isolation from the larger unit and engage in building a sense of community. This handbook reflects the state-of-the-art of voluntary projects which will assist older people in playing a major role in community life. At the same time, it consistently portrays the dignity and competence of older individuals in strong contrast to most age stereotypes.

The projects discussed herein will facilitate mutual aid activities in varying degrees. Those projects which involve a high degree of face-to-face interaction and cooperative working relationships—particularly in buying clubs, service exchanges and urban gardens—are especially useful in attempting to develop better ways of neighboring.

For the most part, the other kinds of projects listed can serve as excellent extensions of formal services or as spin-offs of mutual aid networks. The value of buying clubs, exchanges and gardens, for example, lies in the opportunity made available for positive collective action that cuts across the traditional barriers of age, race and ethnicity. The need for physical security or consumer education, then, is not perceived in this context as the core rationale but rather as a catalyst which will permit the group's activities to take place.

The Mutual Aid Project is essentially concerned with the strengthening and development of cooperative community relationships for the improved function and ultimate survival of people in their neighborhoods. It serves as a training and support center for citizens, community leaders and organizers who share its dual concern for establishing a balance between formal service consumption and self-provision for meeting life's daily needs by:

- Obtaining increased access to resources currently outside the reach or control of community residents;
- Maximizing the utilization and development of the internal resources of a neighborhood.

MAP's training is primarily neighborhood-based and is concerned with informal and formal learning keyed to existing problems of community survival and development. At the same time, it is also concerned with the redefinition and the "de-packaging" of provider services in such a way that these services may then be perceived clearly as resources for the support of area residents. This work is supported by policy analysis and model program development at the citywide level.

Those interested in more information about the activities of the Project should call the **Mutual Aid Project** at its central office (tel. 212-349-8155) or write: 17 Murray Street, 4th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10007.

—*Rick Surpin, Doug Dornan,*
Co-directors

Introduction

Many people have a tendency to view old as necessarily weak, to equate "out of the work force" with living death and to believe that decreased economic production through forced retirement is tantamount to giving up all expectation for productive living.

Too often, we tend to mistake the part for the whole, content to see older people only as older people, much the same way in which we tend to categorize teenagers or farm workers or those of various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

We forget that the old are the sum of their experiences and that they, too, once went to grammar school, fell in love and maintained their own households for longer than many of us have been living. Their backgrounds are often very rich, involving a lifetime of career and useful technical and resource skills. And, simply on a cultural level, we should remember that our elders are walking resources of oral history, having lived through the major apocalypses and triumphs of the twentieth century.

Introduction

Community groups are reminded that the young have no monopoly on creative living. The stereotype of the "little old man" or ". . . lady" is highly offensive to many older people who would rather forego involvement in interesting and useful projects than feel patronized by their juniors.

In conjunction with the feelings of these older people, it must be said that many community groups are coming to realize how valuable their contributions can be. Especially now, when as much help as possible is needed in shoring up the deterioration in many areas of city life. The lifelong acquisition of skills on the part of the older person is clearly a valuable asset, though some of those skills have perhaps been lying dormant since retirement. Many older people understand that their abilities and insights are worthwhile and would enjoy the opportunity to integrate their talents into community efforts, either through general community work or in the service of other older people.

But, like all of us at so many times in our lives, there are many older people who do require some assistance in getting on with the business of living. Some might require physical help, as in the performance of shopping or household duties, for example. For others, assistance might come through the reinforcement of the concept of self-worth which has, sadly and all too often, been eroded from without—through forced retirement, through familial resentment and through self-recrimination on becoming "old." Community groups wishing to integrate these older people into community projects should remember that they will be performing no service by setting up hierarchies of "us" and "them" and by treating older community residents as beneficiaries of the altruism of the club or group.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide some ideas concerning the kinds of projects that can be conducted both for and with older neighborhood residents for the common good. Hopefully, these will benefit both older and younger participants and, in the process, strengthen neighborhood and city life as well.

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UNITE

1 • Planning for neighborhood projects

- A note of encouragement
- First steps
- Neighborhood survey
- Recruitment
- Publicity
- Fund raising
- Proposals
- Politics
- Volunteer resources

Photo by Michael Cala

Though the ideas and suggestions contained in this handbook are useful to all community groups, its contents are particularly geared to the older person and those interested in beginning intergenerational projects.

The key word here is "intergenerational," implying a reciprocity of endeavor and not a unilateral and patronizing relationship. Through the interchange of ideas, workloads, goals and even living arrangements, both younger and older people can begin to experience the feelings that come with true community.

The users of this book will find no attempts to offer cure-alls for urban blight, crime, poverty and the other ills associated with big-city living. It does attempt, however, to plant the seed for long-term community cooperation which will, in turn, at least begin to reverse some of the more

Consciousness of our powers augments them.

Vauvenargues

outstanding problems of neighborhood life. This sense of community involvement will come through the implementation of one or several of the projects detailed in this book, either simultaneously or in succession. The types of projects chosen and their specific nature will vary from neighborhood to neighborhood and from group to group, but it is hoped that enough variety exists so that combinations of projects will fit the needs of virtually all participants.

As opposed to the formal service system (Welfare or Social Security, for example), which stresses the top-down relationship between active giver (government) and passive receiver (client), these projects have been designed to be controlled by the people who come together to do them; thus, the passive client becomes an active, assertive participant in his or her own neighborhood.

A note of encouragement

Many of the projects described in this book, which are illustrated by existing models around the city, were not established over a weekend or a month or, in some cases, even a year or more. There are any number of pitfalls and setbacks inherent in beginning a neighborhood project, especially in areas where none has existed before. Hopefully, some of the ideas and approaches discussed here will enable groups to avoid some of them. Still others will probably be discovered and solved only in the process of performing the projects themselves.

The success of any neighborhood project is directly related to the amount of enthusiasm and commitment given it by the community group. Let it be stressed, though, that all of the projects in this book are feasible, as illustrated by the many groups around the city who are performing them. After an initial project has succeeded, participants will find that it will be much easier in the future to implement others. The result: a long-term cooperative effort among neighbors for their mutual benefit and for the life of the community.

This chapter, then, offers a basic blueprint for the mechanics of establishing community involvement or to augment what already exists. While the sections on recruit-

ment, publicity, fund raising and community needs assessment follow chronologically, page by page and line by line, those wishing to initiate community projects should realize, however, that life is not quite so linear. But with a little legwork, imagination and a willingness to learn, the rewards for these labors far exceed any initial problems.

First steps

Before any group or individual begins program planning, they should become familiar with what already exists. If a neighborhood has many existing services for older people, a group may be most effective if it concentrates on linking older people with these programs, rather than starting new ones, or in assisting older people to become more involved in local planning. Most communities have at least one senior citizen center which offers a wide variety of services to older people. Many of these are understaffed, however, and could use help in expanding their programs. In other words, it is vital for the pilot group to know whether its neighborhood has no such program, one such program, or many; in this way, the strongest community needs will become apparent.

Determining what exists in an area will also help in directing people who need help or linkage to the appropriate group or agency. Information and assistance can be obtained from the borough offices of the New York City Department for the Aging, local churches and synagogues, senior citizen clubs and centers, private social clubs, police stations and older people themselves. All branches of the public library systems maintain often very complete "Community Information Files" that list resources available to local residents; local librarians are also good contacts. Finally, groups should not overlook members within their organizations who may have helpful connections.

Neighborhood survey

The kinds of information that should be looked for include:

1. What are the available information and referral services? What are the nearest counseling services: JASA (Jewish Association for Services to the Aged), Catholic Charities, etc.?
2. Are there transportation and escort services for the elderly?
3. [illegible]

3. Are there senior centers, clubs, etc. that offer social, recreational or educational activities?
4. Are there health care services such as a clinic, hospital or health screening service? How far away?
5. Is there a 24-hour drugstore in the area that fills Medicaid prescriptions and delivers?
6. Who are the local doctors? What are their specialties? Do they accept Medicare or Medicaid? Do they make house calls?
7. Are there mental health services nearby? Will a psychiatrist or psychologist make a home visit for an evaluation?
8. Are in-home services available, including visiting nurse service, home health aides, homemaker/housekeeper service, handyman service, telephone reassurance, friendly visiting, meals-on-wheels?
9. Is there a group hot-meal program?
10. Are there discount programs for older people in the local stores and movie houses?
11. Where is the nearest Legal Aid or other office for free legal advice?
12. What is the quality of services in the area—nursing homes, hospitals, senior centers, etc.?
13. Is there a mechanism for older people to volunteer in community programs? Does RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) or SERVE (the Staten Island branch) place volunteers in the area?
14. Do older people participate in community affairs such as local community boards, health services committees, block and tenant associations? A pilot group should also find out where the nearest offices for the following programs and services are:

- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Social Security
- Police
- Welfare
- Library

Anna Kaufman Moon

If a group feels that the time is right for beginning a block association or similar group in the neighborhood—and no such organization exists—then an organization like the **Citizens Committee for New York City, Inc.,** will provide the base from which to start one. Among the Committee's services are:

- Providing information on organizing a block association,

holding a block party and publicity.

- Sponsoring SNAP (Self-Help Neighborhood Awards Program) which gives cash awards to outstanding examples of neighborhood self-help projects.
- Sponsoring the Mollie Parnis "Dress Up Your Neighborhood" contest, which awards individuals and groups for their improvements to the neighborhood (a community vegetable garden, for example, or a wall mural).
- Sponsoring the Annual Block and Neighborhood Association Conference as well as borough self-help conferences.
- Sponsoring the Parks Preservation Grant Program, which awards up to $100 grants to community groups who wish to carry out development projects in vacant lots, parks and other open spaces.
- Free use of the film, "Block by Block, New Yorkers Helping New York."
- Publication of the **New York Self Help Handbook: A Step by Step Guide to Neighborhood Improvement Projects.**

The Citizens Committee also maintains a Speaker's Bureau, which will provide speakers to established neighborhood groups on a variety of topics of interest to community residents.

The Citizens Committee's overall aim is to act as a catalyst tapping the resources of individuals, groups and businesses for the betterment of New York City life. For more information, contact the Committee at 3 West 29 Street, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10001 (tel. 578-4747). Sandra Silverman is the executive director.

Recruitment

After a neighborhood has been carefully assessed concerning its resources, and after the group has come to an agreement on the type of project or activity for which there is a need or desire, then it is time to begin recruiting people who would be interested in that project.

The following checklist is a valuable reference when deciding whom to recruit and for what purposes:

- Is the group recruiting for a community service activity (such as establishing an escort service for older people or a blockwatcher program) or for a mutually beneficial

self-help project (food buying club, service exchange, urban garden)?

- What tasks are to be performed (searching lot and block numbers for a community garden, for example) and how much time will these take and for how long?
- If qualifications are needed ("we need a carpenter, bookkeeper, etc.") will the non-qualified—but very interested—receive training?
- How will the project be coordinated and who is willing to take long-term responsibility for various aspects of a project and to oversee the whole?
- If volunteers are needed in a community service activity, will they be compensated for travel expenses and the like?
- Are any other benefits provided (insurance, free lunch, small stipend)?

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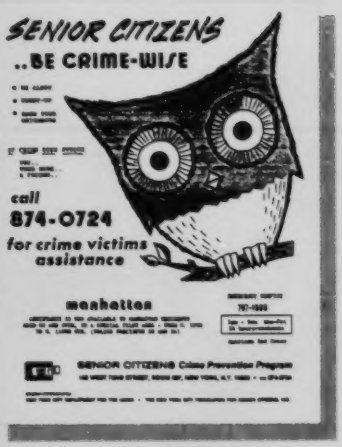
If assessment has been accurate, then there should be no problem in recruiting a core of people for a project. In areas where there is little community group effort, it might be advantageous to begin with a very broad-based, need-related project. This might be a blockwatcher program or a neighborhood safety program in conjunction with the local police precinct (speakers on street crime, safety, etc. are provided, *See Chapter 2*). After initial community efforts are begun, it will then be possible to establish other, more ambitious projects such as food buying clubs, service exchanges, urban gardens and food discount programs.

Publicity

Whether the chosen project is already "on the road," or whether the group wishes to begin recruiting members or volunteers, the most important function is to make information about the project known.

Since most community groups do not have much capital, following are ideas for low-cost, high-impact publicity activities.

Posters and flyers, when well-designed and distributed and when placed in highly-trafficked areas, are extremely effective. It is important that they be simple, concise and, most importantly, attention-grabbing. If the group has a symbol, this should be used prominently in the design of the poster or flyer.



It is important when designing the material to bear in mind that it must attract attention *from a distance*. A lot of copy, in a very small size, with no attention-getting picture or symbol, is boring. No one will read it. Adjacent is an example of an attractive, eye-catching flyer, which is inexpensive and easy to reproduce. Be sure to include on the flyer the name of the program, an address or phone number, as well as a brief description of the group's intention and what is needed.

Flyers should be distributed to:

- stores
- banks
- laundromats
- houses of worship
- libraries
- movie theaters
- high schools and colleges
- block associations
- civic and community centers
- YMCA's, YWCA's, YMHA's, YWHA's
- employment offices
- settlement houses
- senior centers
- hospitals

They can also be distributed on street corners, posted at the entrances of subways or train stations, in the lobbies of residential buildings and slipped under doors Reminder: **DO NOT** place them in mail boxes as this is against the law.

Publicity in the media Since publicity is of vital importance to community projects, this section is an extended treatment of the subject. To organize a community group, to begin a new project or simply to insure optimum attendance at meetings and events, the media—especially the local variety—is a proven asset. Where flyers and posters might miss their mark, notices in newspapers or a 30-second spot announcement on radio or television can make any organizing effort a success.

For more detailed information on the how's and why's of publicity, obtain a copy of the *The ABC's of Publicity* (Pamphlet #1405.1) by writing to: **ACTION,** Office of Recruitment and Communications, 806 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20525.

In addition, nearly all radio and television stations provide free air time for public service announcements. For

information on radio and television announcements, send for the pamphlet *How to Get Air Time* (15¢ per copy) from **The National Association of Broadcasters,** 1771 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. As most radio and television stations schedule their public service time well in advance, plan and submit announcements as early as possible.

Brief newspaper announcements Usually, community-type newspapers—weeklies, monthlies, advertising "shoppers," tenants/civic association bulletins—devote a sizable amount of space to the regular listing of local events. These announcements may publicize a group's special activities (fund raisers, socials); meetings (i.e., meets every Wed., place, time, agenda), or notices calling for volunteers or persons interested in a specific project.

To place a notice, it is advised to contact the publication by phone or visit the editor to find out how far in advance items must be received and what other information is required.

All too often, though, organizations are disappointed to see that their announcements never make it into print. As a rule, most non-daily newspapers are printed at least two or more days in advance of the day readers actually receive them. To facilitate their printing schedules, most editors set deadlines (and stick to them strictly!) regarding publicity items. For this reason it is imperative that the group's publicist considers time carefully, especially with regard to:

- The date of the group's activity.
- The publication date of the newspaper.
- Is there ample time between publication of the announcement and the event itself so interested people can set aside time to attend?
- Taking mail/hand delivery into account, will the notice reach the publication in time for printing?

The press release The term "press release" may sound overly formal, but a concise, typewritten, double-spaced notice will facilitate a publicity request much more than an illegible, hand-written note on an index card. While it is preferable to use the group's letterhead, if it has one,

the press release should:

- Get to the point quickly. Do not bog down the release with names of officers or statements of policy or ideology.
- Give date, time and place (and directions to the location if necessary); state agenda/topic/purpose, if appropriate.
- Give the name of the person in the group chosen to answer questions/give interviews, the phone number (work, home or both) and hours when available.

These three points apply to both the two-line "regular meeting" or "community calendar" type request to a more detailed release when the group becomes established.

Requesting a "feature story" In both the print and broadcast media it is not uncommon for an editor to assign a reporter to write a "profile" or "human interest" story based on a successful or interesting community project. But the editor must first be made aware of its existence.

Once an organization is established and results begin to show, a full length feature story will alert other community people to its success and, inevitably, help to solicit a wider membership.

Again, do not overlook community weeklies and other publications as they are probably more closely read in their areas of circulation than the three New York City dailies *(News, Times, Post)*. And, since these three newspapers and the local television and radio stations have a whole city to cover, groups should not be disappointed if publicity requests go unanswered. Nonetheless, they should be approached as well.

In addition to the three points stressed in the previous section on writing a press release, keep in mind that a more involved request requires a more detailed release.

Some tips:

- Editors are always looking for "angles," i.e., the uniqueness of a story idea that makes it newsworthy. So try to stress the most outstanding accomplishments of the project in the first few sentences.
- To heighten interest, try some specific examples of how one person has been aided or has benefitted by the group's efforts, as in a short "case history." It could be described

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how the person (neighborhood, block or building for that matter) was before the onset of the project and what positive results have unfolded.

- Explain exactly what the group is, how many or what areas are benefitting and how many are participating. It is not necessary to describe how the group got started and who the participants are. If editors show any interest in the idea, that information will eventually be brought out in the story.
- In selecting a spokesperson for the organization, this person should be someone the group feels confident will be able to answer reporters' questions intelligently and accurately. Remember, no one needs bad publicity. Should inaccuracies and false impressions surface publicly, the reporter may have been at fault *or* the person chosen by the group to disseminate the information.

Advertising Many people confuse "advertisement" with "publicity." In terms of dollars and cents, the two are by no means synonymous.

An advertisement is a space that must be paid for; an article, notice or listing—anything that falls into the "editorial" content of the newspaper or station—is usually free and is considered a public service.

Advertising in a newspaper or on radio or television is a costly proposition and should only be used as a last resort or in special circumstances when the group feels it is appropriate or necessary.

If the organization wishes to go the paid advertisement route, make sure to ask for a nonprofit rate even if the organization is not formally incorporated as such. Most local newspaper publishers will bend their rules if it is clear that the group exists for the benefit of the community and that all proceeds will be put toward that end. The major newspapers and television and radio stations often require verifiable proof of nonprofit status before granting the special rate.

On the local level, a nonprofit rate will reduce the cost of the ad by 5 to 20 percent. With a little persuasiveness, publishers may offer bigger discounts . . . or even donate the space completely.

Con Edison publishes Customer News *which, in addition to providing information on new services and technology and energy-saving tips, also publishes notices concerning the activities of many community groups around the city. Because it is attractive, reaching many other groups and individuals in the metropolitan area,* Customer News *is an excellent way of obtaining free publicity for your group or event.*

Write to: Customer News, *Con Edison, Room 640, 4 Irving Place, New York, N.Y. 10003.*

Fund raising

Many projects may be eligible for federal or city funding. The New York City Department for the Aging should be consulted for technical assistance and information about funding requirements.

Borough Offices of the Dept. for the Aging:

Brooklyn
66 Court Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
Telephone: 855-1208

Manhattan
415 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017
Telephone: 759-3870

West Bronx
153 East 170 Street
Bronx, N.Y. 10452
Telephone: 992-0155

Staten Island
Administrative Office Bldg.
St. George Ferry Terminal
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301
Telephone: 981-1680

Pelham Parkway
2141 Barnes Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10462
Telephone: 931-9192

Queens
70-50 Austin Street
Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375
Telephone: 544-1265

To be able to get foundation or government funding, a group must be incorporated and tax-exempt or be affiliated with a group that has this status and will act as sponsor to receive funds. For further information and assistance visit **The Foundation Center,** 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019 (tel. 975-1120), which provides information on foundations through its libraries, research activities and publications. The library is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays. There is always a librarian on the premises to offer assistance.

Anna Kaufman Moon

Proposals

Asking for a foundation or government grant entails writing a proposal. A good proposal should include:

- Covering letter—a brief statement of *who* the group is and *what* it proposes to do.
- Statement of need or problem.
- Goals and objectives of the project, especially the *method*—how will goals be reached and in what period of time?
- *Evaluation*—how will the group know if it has achieved its goals?
- Statement of *qualification*—why this group? What makes it special?
- The budget—*how much* is needed to run the program and how will it be spent?
- List of board members and staff.
- Letters of support or recommendation (from congresspersons, religious leaders, sponsoring group director).

Some foundations that supply grants specifically for projects concerning older people are:

Florence V. Burden Foundation
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10020
Harriet Warm, Executive Director
Funds only for innovative programs or those concerned with policy issues.

New York Community Trust
415 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017
Herbert B. West, Director
This foundation will consider proposals for projects dealing with older people. Write for further guidelines.

New York Foundation
4 West 58 Street
New York, N.Y. 10019
Madeline Lee, Director
The above foundation tends to support experimental groups and programs shunned by most other foundations. It supports

programs in the areas of medicine and public health, social services, education, and to a lesser degree, the arts.
Joint Foundation Support
1 East 53 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022
Patricia Hewitt, Executive Director

Politics

Older people are a fully recognized political block and often vote in large numbers. Candidates running for public office realize this and will make a point of talking to groups concerning pertinent issues. If a group wishes to talk to a candidate, arrangements should be made with the office seeker's campaign headquarter's scheduling department.

Elected officials are also available. The booklet *They Represent You* is published by the League of Women Voters and lists public officials' addresses and telephone numbers. The League also has a speakers bureau which will arrange for speakers to meet and discuss election issues and topics of general public interest. **The League of Women Voters** is located at 817 Broadway, New York, N.Y 10003 (tel. 677-5050).

The following groups are made up of older people and others working for changes to benefit older people and the rest of society:

Community Action and Resources for the Elderly, (CARE) 410 East 62 Street, New York, N.Y. 10021 (tel. 755-0876). This group works on nursing home reform, specifically by addressing concerns and complaints of those in nursing homes or seeking placement in one.

Congress of Senior Citizens of Greater New York, 13 Astor Place, New York, N.Y. 10003. Studies, researches and performs legislative lobbying for the benefit of older adults.

GET, Inc. (Gas, Electricity, Telephone), P.O. Box 355, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023. Works to make utilities more responsive to consumers.

The Gray Panthers, 15 West 65 Street, New York,

A man finds that he has been wrong at every preceding stage of his career, only to deduce the astonishing conclusion that he is at last entirely right.

R.L. Stevenson

Michael Cala

N.Y. 10024. Also meets regularly at the West-Park Presbyterian Church, 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. For information call Sylvia Wexler • 749-5861 or Irving Weisenfeld • 877-8334. The group is working to change negative media images of older persons and organizes around issues such as National Health Insurance, better transportation, free access to medical information and an end to forced retirement.

League of Women Voters of the City of New York, 817 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003 (tel. 677-5050), publishes information on lobbying, voting records of legislators, voter registration, polling places, issues of local, state or national concern.

National Retired Teachers' Association, and **American Association of Retired Persons,** 555 Madison Avenue, 2nd Floor, New York, N.Y. 10022 (tel. 758-1411), supports research and educational work in its Gerontology Center; conducts courses in some colleges and in national centers, offers social and travel activities; has prescription drug service for members.

New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), 5 Beekman Street, Room 410, New York, N.Y. 10038 (tel. 349-6460). This Nader-affiliated group is working to give consumers information on the goods and services they use.

New York State Coalition of the Concerned for Older Americans (COCOA), 105 East 22 Street, Room 710, New York, N.Y. 10010 (tel. 677-0250), examines and discusses proposed legislation, decides on recommendations for new laws, and gives unified support before the legislature for the decisions made by legislators on behalf of the elderly.

New York State-Wide Senior Action Council, 349 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 925-0101). Active membership and leadership in 10 regions principally educating legislators and lobbying for all issues benefitting the elderly.

Seniors for Adequate Social Security (SASS), 136 West 91 Street, New York, N.Y. 10024 (tel. 666-1270). Meetings held at 2 West 64 Street, Manhattan. Striving for higher social security benefits, improved health care service and pensions for the elderly.

Volunteer resources

Older people spend a good deal of their time in the neighborhood and have much valuable talent and resources to offer the community. An attempt should be made to integrate local older adults into existing community-based programs such as block and neighborhood associations.

Most day care centers, senior centers, schools, institutions, museums and hospitals need volunteers and could benefit from the time, experience and expertise older people may be willing to give. Quite often programs are age-segregated (run for or by one age group only); more often, programs are structured so that the young serve the old.

For the addresses of the day care centers in each area, call:

- **Bronx** . . . 960-6622
- **Lower Manhattan** to 14th Street and entire West Side to 110th Street . . . 433-2900
- **East Side of Manhattan** from 14th Street to 110th Street and above 110th Street both East and West Side . . . 460-8431 or 460-8432
- **Queens** . . . 990-5914
- **Brooklyn:** Downtown area . . . 433-3604
  East N.Y. area . . . 636-2496
  Flatbush
  Borough Park Area . . . 438-6334
- **Staten Island** . . . 438-6390

Geraldine Cooke

Some community members may already have expressed the desire to offer their time and skills in community service or to begin a mutually beneficial project. Organizations to call for referral, advice or to volunteer are following:

Mayor's Voluntary Action Center has volunteer jobs in many areas including probation, education, housing, addiction, day care, etc. Central Office . . . 566-5950
Queens 353-6455
Brooklyn 624-4221

The American Red Cross needs volunteers to help meet the immediate needs of disaster victims as well as fight disasters, assist with non-medical tasks at mobile blood donor units, assist with youth programs, drive and perform clerical work (tel. 787-1000).

Executive Volunteer Corps is sponsored by the Office of Economic Development. Successful retired business men and women give advice to people who want to start their own businesses. Volunteers work at 415 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. (tel. 593-8660).

Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults (JSPOA) has established a Senior Citizen Advisory Council which is playing a major role in the agency's planning and policy making. Its health, safety, legislation, education and outreach committees are composed of older elected representatives who plan, organize and implement this program. For further information, call Hector Hill or Ellen Camerieri of JSPOA at 657-6500.

The **Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies** maintains a Volunteer Placement division which assigns volunteers citywide. Call 777-4800 for further information.

SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) is sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration and is made up of retired executives who are willing to volunteer their time to counsel small business people having difficulties making their businesses work. The SCORE office is at 26 Federal Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10007, and is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (tel. 264-4507).

School Volunteer Program, 20 West 40 Street, New York, N.Y. 10018 (tel. 563-5620). Volunteers tutor and assist on a one-to-one basis with pupils in city schools. Required training is provided so prior teaching experience is not necessary, just availability twice a week during school hours. This type of work can be quite rewarding as the pupils respond to individual attention. Volunteers will be placed in schools as close as possible to their homes. A community group can perform the recruiting and the School Volunteer Program will do the rest.

United Community Centers is a neighborhood program in Brooklyn that has integrated older people into the community. A particular emphasis of their program is to involve the elderly, on a voluntary basis, as educational agents in local day care centers, teaching the children skills such as gardening, baking, sewing, telling stories, discussing

their own lives and participating in other activities. Write: 833 Van Siclen Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207 (tel. 649-7979).

United Hospital Fund of New York, 3 East 54 Street, 4th Floor, New York, N.Y. (tel. 754-1080, ext. 842). Provides general information on hospital volunteer programs throughout the city and makes referrals. Volunteers are expected to serve three to four hours one day per week, Monday-Friday 9-5, or two to three hours one evening (or weekend) per week.

Note: Most major institutions (museums, libraries, hospitals, botanical gardens, zoos, mental institutions, foster homes, etc.), as well as local programs, need volunteers. Interested parties should telephone the institution they are interested in and ask if volunteers are needed, or they can go through any of the services mentioned above.

Community is a corner of society where the individual can feel some confidence of acceptance on fairly honest terms and can maintain continuing association with others whose familiarity is comforting.

Community provides a mooring for the spirit, for community is a restraint that liberates. It relieves us of the necessity to continually prove our worth or to seek reassurance of that worth. Members of a community may not be friends, but they are not strangers.

Richard N. Goodwin

Anna Kaufman Moon

Long years must pass before the truths we have made for ourselves become our very flesh.

Paul Valéry

2 • Self protection projects

- Safety in numbers shopping program
- Apartment and home safety
- Escort services
- Police whistle and freon horn projects
- Blockwatchers
- List of self-protection resources

Safety at home and in the street is a very real concern for all people. Older persons, however, are particularly imperiled by mugging and robberies because they are perceived as "easy targets" by criminals—their physical vulnerability is highly visible. Awareness of diminished physical strength and the knowledge that recovery from broken bones and bruises is slower and more difficult often causes the older person to be less likely to fight back.

The constant awareness of one's vulnerability often forces the older person to live in anxiety over physical safety. This anxiety, in turn, permeates into all aspects of life and has a restrictive and often devastating effect on the lifestyles and mobility of older people.

People *can* assume a greater degree of responsibility for their own defense. Many community residents, however,

Photo by Michael Cala

perceive defense only in relationship to summoning the police in a crisis situation. But there is, as in medical prevention of disease, a preventive self-defense which entails preparation for eventualities of criminal attack. For example, since many people are attacked when walking alone, care should be taken to travel in two's and small groups; information on apartment security should be solicited from the New York City Police Department and the National Retired Teachers Association and other groups; and at least one group offers older people training in physical self-defense *(See resource section, this chapter)*.

Following are several feasible community projects which can lessen the danger of victimization for older people.

Safety in numbers shopping program

Many older people are afraid to go shopping or banking alone because they are a favorite target for attack. An easy and practical program is to arrange for a group of older people to shop or go to the bank together. This provides "safety in numbers," making shopping more enjoyable and giving many older adults an opportunity to make new friends.

To set it up:

- Depending on the neighborhood, it may be preferable to have several groups operating at the same time. For example, if an apartment building in the neighborhood houses many older people, it may be best to organize each building separately. This way participants can walk each other to their doors and the relationships formed can lead to other cooperative projects such as joint meals, buying clubs, service exchanges and similar projects.
- Announce plans for a group shopping program and set up a daytime meeting to discuss the program. Explain what it would entail.
- Place signs in stores, senior centers, synagogues, churches, etc., asking all those interested in such a program to come to a meeting. Give the time and location of the meeting and a phone number to call for information.
- When the group meets, it should decide when shopping is most convenient (which day and time), and where shopping

is agreeable to all. The group should also designate a meeting place, making sure it is a safe one. If the group is from the same apartment building, a meeting place in the lobby is best. The group can shop and bank once a week or more—same days and times each week—and go anywhere else that is mutually agreeable.

- If none of the shoppers is willing to take responsibility, have the group accompanied by a volunteer for at least the first time or two so that someone who understands the program is there. Any volunteer should plan to spend at least three hours with the group from start to finish, since the shoppers will want to take their time.

Many members of the Bronx Union YMCA Senior Nutrition Program *shop together in groups of three or more so that the likelihood of any one person's being alone and becoming vulnerable is lessened (tel. 796-2559).*

Apartment and home safety

Michael Cala

Burglary and robbery are two facts of city living which cannot be ignored. It is particularly evident in the case of older people where criminals will take brazen steps against them when they wouldn't against younger, more physically able people.

Much of this type of home-based crime can be averted, however, if people will take necessary preventive steps.

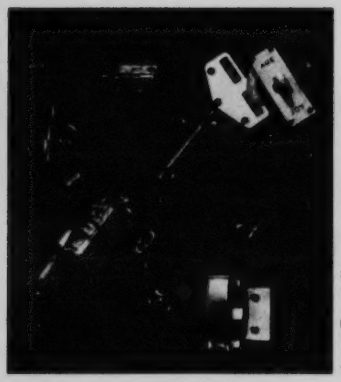
Following is a list of tips and precautions for both homeowners and apartment dwellers which will minimize the opportunities for thieves to gain access for the purpose of burglary, robbery or physical attack.

Apartment Dwellers:

- In elevator buildings, never enter an elevator with anyone not known to live in the building.
- When walking up stairs, be wary of dark spots in halls and under stair wells; perhaps an arrangement can be made to form an escort service *(See next section).*
- When not at home, leave a radio on loud enough to be heard beyond the apartment threshold. While this is an old trick, it is up to the thief to call your bluff. If the apartment has a safety peephole, direct a lamp in its direction to

give the impression that someone is at home. Likewise, for apartments having street or fire escape access, a lamp placed near the window will let people think that the apartment is occupied.

- Never, under any circumstances, let repairmen or utility company people in unless they are accompanied by the landlord or building maintenance person, or if they are expected.
- Install safety latches on all windows and use them. There is a type of window catch which does allow the window to be opened an inch or two without releasing the mechanism. These are inexpensive and easy to install.
- When unlocking an apartment door from the outside, never allow anyone to stand near. If that person wants entry, he or she will force the resident into the apartment, close the door and feel free to attack or rob.
- If a suspicious noise is heard in the hallway or if an unidentified knock is heard at the door, do not open the door to check. The best thing to do is to call building maintenance or the police.
- Organize a group to do laundry. Apartment building laundry rooms are notorious for their poor location and isolation from the rest of the building. To protect against lone victimization, people on the same floor or those interested in group protection should decide on a time agreeable to all. To cut waiting times, people can pool their clothing loads so that several people with small amounts of things to be washed do not have to wait for each small load.
- If a key must be used to enter the apartment house, do not feel embarrassed by closing the door on someone who is waiting for the buzzer to sound. This person can just be waiting for an easy method of gaining access to the building.
- In buildings with an intercom system, always use it. Ask identification. If not satisfied, do not ring the buzzer.
- Door locks should never be taken for granted. If the apartment door has only a spring-bolt, it is a good idea to have a deadbolt installed as well as a safety plate around the outside tumbler to dissuade lock jimmying. To increase security, locks should be sophisticated enough to have at least a five-pin tumbler.



Anne Fanciullo

- Any screws that are visible on the exterior face of the lock should be disfigured so that they cannot be removed.
- Never assume that young children, women or business executives are okay. Self-protection means that one should prepare for all eventualities and assume the unexpected. It is better to suffer some mild embarrassment when refusing access to someone "working his way through college selling magazines" than to be sorry later.

Homeowners:

Many of the tips for apartment dwellers apply equally to those living in their own homes. Of course, security becomes more complicated since a house usually has more points of possible entry. Here are some precautions which apply particularly to homeowners:

- Do not let shrubbery grow high enough to conceal a person. This applies not only to areas near the front and back doors, but to the garage and carport areas as well.
- Burglars are attracted to glass windows, doors, panels, etc., as a means to gain entry. All glass within 40 inches of the door locking mechanism should either be removed completely or fortified with wrought iron bars, gratings or disguised by decorative wood shutters which can be unlatched from the inside.
- Garages, especially those that offer access into the house, should be made as secure as any other area of the home. This is particularly true because garages often contain ladders and tools which can only be helpful to a burglar.
- If a house has sliding patio doors, these should be made secure by wedging pipe or strong wood against the inside back edge of the sliding door. For the non-sliding portion of the door, angle brackets should be installed to secure the door to the frame. Screws should be at least two-and-a-half inches long to be sure they enter the wood behind the door frame.
- Double hung windows, the most common type, can be made more secure by adding a "nail lock" to accompany the usual butterfly lock. At a slight downward angle, drill a 9/64 inch hole through each corner of the lower window (in closed position). Continue drilling until halfway into the lower corners of

the upper window. Take two common 16 penny nails and insert them in each hole. Burglars do not enjoy playing guessing games after they have jimmied the normal lock. Do not nail windows closed since they will be useless as fire exits.

- In a multi-floor dwelling, lights should be turned on in several rooms that can be viewed from the street or from behind.
- If home alone and the doorbell rings, shout loud enough to an imaginary person, "I'll get it, John" or something similar. Then ask, without opening the door, the identity of the visitor. The fact that someone else may be home will deter potential attackers.
- When moving into a new home or apartment, do not fail to have all locks rekeyed since anyone can have a key to the home. Locks do not have to be replaced, however, and the small additional price for rekeying is well worth the peace of mind it affords.

Escort services

To the doctor, hospital, clinic, bank and other essential services; to cultural and entertainment opportunities that can make life more pleasant. Many older people cannot keep medical appointments or make other types of trips. They frequently cannot travel alone because of health, safety or transportation problems, or sometimes simply because they have no one to go with. A community group can arrange for volunteers to escort them to and from their weekly appointments.

To set it up:

- Decide the geographic radius of the program—it should be rather small at the outset. Have a program coordinator to recruit volunteers and match them with interested older people. Allow flexibility for changing partners if the first pair is not compatible.
- The volunteer should be given the phone number of an interested older person. They can get together at first in a public location to discuss what kinds of places (movies, museums, parks, theaters) both would like to visit and when it would be most convenient to go, or for what appointment that person would like to have an escort. The

Photo by Anna Kaufman Moon

volunteer can pick the person up at home and they should make the trip together. Each pays his or her own expenses. If the two are compatible, there is no more work for the program coordinator except to check with each person periodically to make sure everything is working well.

- Have two or three people act as program coordinators. Arrange for a telephone number for volunteers and potential participants to call. Someone's home number or an inexpensive answering machine can be used.
- Set up a daily calendar listing volunteer escorts for each day, along with the people to be escorted (include all telephone numbers). Have substitute and special volunteers in case of emergency.
- Participants can arrange for an escort on a regular basis or call in advance for an escort for a particular day and time. It is preferable to keep the same pairing of escort and participant so that a friendship can develop between the two, but the option to change partners should be open.
- Keep in regular contact with both participants and escorts to insure that things are going smoothly. Referrals of older people can come from senior centers, churches, individuals and other community organizations.
- Recruit volunteers. Speak to the local high school about getting students to act as escorts. One group has arranged time off from school for this type of volunteer student activity. Try to establish a system of giving students extra credit for an agreed amount of escorting. Another group uses Neighborhood Youth Corps funds to pay high school student escorts. Church groups, PTA's, community groups, Boy/Girl Scouts are other resources for recruiting. Older people themselves can be recruited in the formation of tenant patrols, blockwatching and in the escorting of other older people.

New York City has a Senior Citizen Escort Program *in which volunteers, recruited predominantly from high schools, are selected and trained by the local police precinct Community Affairs officers and assigned to escort older persons to and from stores, banks and senior centers in their neighborhoods.*

A variation of this program is working in the Bronx, with a police officer from the Cross Bronx Expressway Police Precinct escorting 50 older people from the Mt. Eden Senior Center to do their marketing once a week (tel. 294-8698).

Taft High School *in the Bronx has 70 volunteers who work for a minimum of one-and-a-half hours per week in senior centers, escorting older people. Students work in teams of two or more and are not paid but receive school credit. For information, contact Michael Mirakian at 588-7282.*

Police whistle and freon horn projects

A well-coordinated police whistle or freon horn program can make a neighborhood a safer place for everyone. The sound of a police whistle blowing alerts neighbors that someone is in danger and helps discourage potential attackers.

To set it up:

- Schedule a community meeting to discuss neighborhood safety problems and to inform residents of the whistle/freon horn program. The community affairs officer or the crime prevention officer from the local police precinct can be invited to speak and to give professional advice. Contact the **Crime Prevention Unit** of the New York City Police Department, 137 Center Street, New York, N.Y. 10038 (tel. 374-3810). CPU will also do home security assessments.
- Obtain and distribute police whistles or freon horns to neighborhood residents. Try to have them donated by a local merchant or bank. Perhaps a local sporting goods store will offer a special discount on volume buying or the manufacturer might sell them in bulk and at cost.
- It is important to inform *all* neighborhood members that when they hear the sound of a police whistle or a freon horn blowing that someone is in trouble and they should respond by blowing their own whistle and calling the police. Residents should be told about the program through newsletters, flyers, by word-of-mouth and posted notices.
- Distribute instructions on how to use whistles/freon horns and conduct periodic tests with local residents so that everyone will understand how the system works. Tests can be conducted in hallways, courtyards and apartments.
- Advise people to carry the whistle/freon horn in an accessible

Freon horn
Gas powered pocket alarm which emits a piercing sound when nozzle is depressed, alerting neighbors and police to possible danger

Michael Cala

outer pocket at all times and have it handy when entering buildings or hallways or when alone on a dark street. To call for assistance, blow the whistle as loud and as long as it takes to summon help, or sound the freon horn in many bursts.

- Instruct area children about the program, stressing the seriousness of unnecessarily blowing whistles in a neighborhood where people are asked to respond to a whistle as a distress signal.
- Involve local elected officials. Have them back the program and help publicize it.

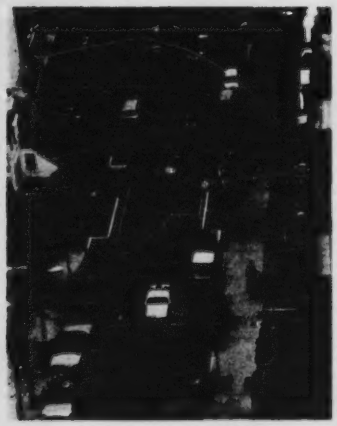
The Bronx Chamber of Commerce *launched a large whistle compaign and distributed a safety brochure and whistles to 25,000 older adults in the Bronx.*

Citizens Local Alliance for a Safer Philadelphia *(CLASP) utilizes freon horns as a pocketable alarm to nonviolently repel an attacker and alert neighbors and police of criminal attack. Safety hints are distributed along with the horns.*

Blockwatchers

These are neighborhood residents trained by the police to report crimes, unusual activity and emergencies to their local police precinct. Currently, there are more than 20,000 blockwatchers in New York City and this worthwhile project is relatively easy to organize.

To set it up:



Clem Fiori

- Contact the crime prevention officer of the local police precinct. He/she has full information on blockwatching and will be helpful in recruiting volunteers.
- Recruit volunteers. Call a meeting of the group and invite the community affairs officer to speak.
- Training sessions will be scheduled by the Police Department. They will provide one to three hours of instruction on what to look for, how to give accurate descriptions and how to properly report incidents. Blockwatchers will be issued a specific identification number for use in emergency situations. This enables the telephone call to the Police Department to be processed promptly while the caller retains anonymity.

- As a deterrent to crime, notices should be posted around the neighborhood publicizing the existence of blockwatchers.

The Mid-American Regional Council, *Kansas City, Missouri, has a "Neighborhood Watch" program that stresses the individual's role as a responsible neighbor. It provides additional protection for all community members as well as older persons and involves all people regardless of age. Their booklet, "Neighborhood Watch," lists descriptive elements that should arouse suspicion, offers advice and instructions. The booklet, for example, recommends that suspicious people should not be confronted alone and that signs be posted notifying the public that a watch exists—this, in itself, acts as a deterrent.*

Brooklyn's 94th Police Precinct *in Greenpoint has an excellent blockwatching project in operation. For more information, contact Sgt. Walsh at 963-7408.*

Resources for self-protection

Citizens' Action for a Safer Harlem, the Brooklyn affiliate of CASH, sends volunteer professional martial arts instructors to senior groups to give free lessons in self-defense to older people. Call 778-1200 for further information.

Early Alert, sponsored by the City Department for the Aging and the U.S. Postal Service, aims to provide a feeling of security for older people. Persons 65 and over who register for this program give the Department for the Aging permission to call them if their mailman notifies the Department that mail has not been picked up for several days. The Early Alert staff will try to contact the individual by telephone. If they cannot reach the older person involved, they will then call the friend listed on the information form. For further information, write Early Alert, Department for the Aging, 280 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 577-0374).

A police officer is available to speak to groups on crime prevention or related topics. Call the **Crime Prevention Unit,** 137 Center Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 374-3810), to arrange for a speaker. Ask if speakers are available from the special Senior Citizens Unit. Local police precincts also will send a speaker to a group.

Transportation Easyride provides door-to-door transportation in special vans (many equipped with hydraulic lifts) for Lower East Side residents who are disabled or over 60. Specially trained drivers will pick up people in their apartments and accompany them to their destinations and back again. Reservations should be made as far in advance as possible and no less than 48 hours before the time transportation is needed. The fee for this service is a 15¢ donation. For more information, or to ride along and help, contact Easyride, 125 Delancey Street, New York, N.Y. 10002 (tel. 533-3700).

A member of the Fire Department will speak to any community groups of 15 people or more on fire prevention, false alarms, arson and other topics. Speakers are available any time, including evenings and weekends. A Spanish-speaking lecturer is also available. Requests for speakers, with specifics, should be made in advance by writing: **New York City Fire Department,** Community Relations Bureau, 110 Church Street, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 566-7951).

Senior Citizen Anti-Crime Network (SCAN) is a pilot program that works with police, community groups, senior centers and block associations. Purpose: to reduce crime against older people. At its Bronx office (tel. 798-4200), located at 1882 Grand Concourse, SCAN performs victim counseling and referral work. SCAN will train individuals or groups of older people in self-protection and will also help to organize self-protection projects. For crime prevention training, contact one of SCAN's other offices. In Flatbush, 783 Rogers Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. (tel. 462-5300), and in Queens, 33-68 21 Street, Long Island City, N.Y. (tel. 721-2100).

Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults (JSPOA) sponsors an intergenerational, community-based anti-crime coalition of older people, youth, police and neighborhood groups and agencies working to combat crime against older people. It provides safety programs, crime prevention education and victim assistance. For more information about this and about JSPOA's effective crime reporting form, call 969-0137. Ellen Camerieri is the executive director.

Senior Citizen Crime Assistance and Prevention Program (SCCAPP) has the joint goals of reducing crime against older people and assisting older victims in the neighborhoods of Central and East Harlem, Brownsville and Crown Heights. SCCAPP is located at 349 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 433-4526).

Senior Citizen Crime Prevention Program offers crime victim assistance services, coordination of city-wide crime victim assistance centers, specialized crime prevention education and victim assistance training. Assistance is provided in applying for New York State Crime Victims Compensation, replacement of stolen ID cards and aid in understanding the criminal justice system. Referrals are made to local community service organizations for temporary financial aid, emergency housing or relocation and transportation or personal escort services.
The victim assistance center, at 155 West 72 Street, is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., serving persons 60 and over who live on Manhattan's West Side between 59th and 110th Streets on a walk-in or appointment basis. For more information, call 874-0724.

The American Red Cross has an emergency referral phone at 787-1000 covering night hours (5-9 p.m.) and 24 hours a day on weekends for all five boroughs.

Senior Citizen Anti-Crime Units deal with robberies and muggings of older people. Call the local precinct for information. To get this number, call 374-5000, -6700.

The **Witness Aid Bureau,** located in the Manhattan District Attorney's office, provides assistance to laypeople not familiar with legal terminology or with court procedures. The bureau helps with any problems concerning court appearances or with those arising from crime. For more information, contact them at 553-9000.

Similar services are offered in the Bronx by the **Crime Victim Witness Assistance Unit,** 215 East 161 Street, Room 4B12 (tel. 590-2115). In Brooklyn, contact **VERA, Witness Victim Unit** (tel. 834-7400). And in Queens, crime victim assistance can be obtained from the **Special Victims Bureau,** located in the District Attorney's office (tel. 520-2132).

Anna Kaufman Moon

3 • Projects for the homebound

- Food and medical delivery
- Library delivery
- Homebound services
- Household modification

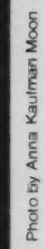


Photo by Anna Kaufman Moon

There are many older people living alone in New York City who can't or won't leave their apartments or homes. Victims of either illnesses, frailties or fear, these homebound persons are virtually trapped indoors and find it difficult to have even their basic needs met.

This segment of the older adult population maintains ties with the outside world only through radio or television, and may go for days—even weeks—without human contact save for an occasional phone call. And the vision of life provided by the electronic media—its portrayals of violence, its stereotyping of older persons and condescending attitudes toward them—is certainly no reassurance.

Even a necessity like food can prove troublesome for the older homebound adult. In some neighborhoods, local grocery stores have been knocked out of business by the big chain supermarkets, virtually halting home delivery—once a common practice.

People need people. Especially the homebound, who were once as mobile as their younger neighbors. They need to feel they have not been forgotten by the world around them, whether this end is accomplished through friendly visiting or participation in a full-scale project.

For community groups who would like to provide needed services to the homebound without sacrificing the older person's dignity, this chapter offers ideas as well as current programs as a guide.

What was hard to endure is sweet to recall.

Yiddish proverb

Food and medical delivery

This is a program that many homebound older people will want to participate in, since many groceries and drug stores no longer deliver. A group can arrange to have volunteers deliver food from the grocery or drug store to the homebound at least once a week.

To set it up:

- Local PTA's, Boy or Girl Scouts, schools, the Police Athletic League or other service organizations are likely sources for volunteers.
- Volunteers should be willing to devote two hours a week to this task. If possible, arrange to have several volunteers who are willing to be on call for emergency deliveries, especially from the drug store.
- Get referrals of homebound persons from hospitals, clinics and senior centers. Signs with the group's phone number can be placed next to mail boxes to alert the community to the project. This would attract volunteers as well as the homebound.
- Contact local groceries, supermarkets, and drug stores to arrange details such as charges and who will pack and deliver. Stress that in exchange for providing this service the store will receive free publicity and increase its patronage.
- People can telephone orders to the store which will then be picked up and delivered by the volunteers. Many large stores will not be willing to have orders phoned in or to pack them. While small store owners may agree to this because they have the time and need the customers, they may be more expensive.
- If a discount for older adults cannot be arranged, the homebound person might want to check prices before placing an order. As an alternative, a shopping list could be picked up at the home by the volunteer who would then proceed to do the shopping.
- Doctors' prescriptions may need to be picked up at either the homebound person's home or the doctor's office and delivered to the pharmacy.
- Arrange with the store owner a system for paying the bills. In small stores where people call in their orders, perhaps the owner can tell the caller how much it will cost and he or she can pay by check (made out in the exact amount to the

store). Where this is impossible, it is wise for the program to be linked to a reputable community agency in which the volunteers and participants are personally known and trusted by the program director. The person can then feel safe to give money to the volunteer shopper.

- Volunteer deliverers should be identified by a special badge or card made for the program. The cards can be printed inexpensively (perhaps a local printer can donate them or the participating stores can donate money for them). If possible, the homebound participant should be told in advance who the deliverer will be and when to expect delivery.

To announce the program:

- Give a number to call for signing up (as participant and/or volunteer).
- List the cooperating stores and their phone numbers.
- Give the dates and times for deliveries and where and when to call in orders.

Have one or two people coordinate the program and arrange at what time and to which store each volunteer should report. Compile a list of substitute volunteers as well.

A variation of this project has been set up by D'Agostino Bros. in their supermarkets. They have established a free delivery service for homebound older people living within a ten-block radius of any D'Agostino food store. A senior center, community group, organization, church or social service agency can notify, by mail or telephone, the local D'Agostino manager, giving the homebound individual's name and address. The store will then provide free delivery service to that person. A volunteer does the shopping and once the order is packed it is then delivered without charge.

Library delivery

Many homebound people have no way of taking advantage of the New York Public Library. The volunteer group can organize a library delivery system that will enable the homebound to continue reading books, to receive recordings and take advantage of other library services. The number of potential participants might be small, but for them it is an invaluable service.

To set it up:

- Someone from the group should take responsibility for the program and work with the librarian at the local NYPL branch. This person should make the necessary arrangements to be sure that there are enough volunteers to deliver books to all who want them. One or two extra volunteers who don't want to be regular deliverers but who are willing to fill in when necessary should also be recruited. Some branches have such programs already, but may need more volunteer deliverers.
- A volunteer should be willing to go to the library once a week to pick up several books or records, deliver them to homebound person and take back materials that have been used. It means giving one or two hours a week and can be done at night if the library is open. Some existing programs utilize schoolchildren and scouts as well as adults.
- Get the names of homebound people who would like books delivered to them through referrals (relatives, neighbors, visiting nurses), or if the program is publicized, the homebound person can contact the group or librarian directly.
- Depending on what is arranged with the local librarian, the homebound person can order books in several ways:

  The librarian calls each participant and asks what books or records are wanted this week. This is the best method since the librarian knows what is available and can offer suggestions.

  The volunteer calls the participant and asks what books are wanted. If the participant does not have any particular book in mind the person can discuss the kinds of books or subject areas that he or she is interested in and the volunteer can discuss with the librarian which books would be best.
- The volunteer should take the books out with the participant's library card. If the participant does not have one, the volunteer can help fill out the proper forms to get a card, which is free of charge. Or, the sponsoring group can take out an "Institutional Lending Card," which means the group has ultimate responsibility for the books or records borrowed. This method should be used only if

At certain moments a single almost insignificant sorrow may, by association, bring together all the little relics of pain and discomfort, bodily and mental, that we have endured even from infancy

Coleridge

Photo by Anna Kaufman Moon

participants are reluctant to turn over their library cards to a stranger.

If they wish, the volunteer and the participant can discuss books that both have read, and the volunteer can suggest books as well.

Spoken records and large-print books, as well as a good selection of music albums, are available at most libraries. People who are legally blind are entitled to "Talking Books." For further information, pick up a brochure at any branch or call: 925-1011.

Both the New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries *offer many services of interest to older people. At all branches of either system, applications for many city agency programs may be obtained (half-fare cards, exemption forms, etc.). Both systems also maintain "Community Information files" which are current listings of services and groups of importance to older people. The* BPL's SAGE Program *provides many services, such as Talking Books and Books By Mail, for the homebound or for those whose vision is poor.*

The NYPL *has published "Services for Older Adults," which provides information on activities and resources available to older people at all of its branches. Free copies are available at local branches.*

Existing services to the homebound

Registering to vote Older persons may have been unable to vote in previous elections or may never have registered, thus making them ineligible to cast ballots. For the homebound adult, as well as anyone else, the Board of Elections will forward a voter registration form which can be returned by mail. To receive the form call 226-2600, ext. 25.

For additional information contact the borough Board of Elections offices:

Bronx: 1780 Grand Concourse . 299-9017
Brooklyn: 345 Adams Street . . . 522-2441
Manhattan: 80 Varick Street 226-2600
Queens: 77-40 Vleigh Place, Flushing. 380-2600
Staten Island: 30 Bay Street. . . . 727-4300

Once registered, voters in New York State are permanently registered as long as they live at the same address and vote at least once in every two consecutive years.

Absentee ballots Applications for absentee ballots can be obtained by writing or calling the Board of Elections in each borough. Requests for ballots can be made up to one month before election day. Ballots must be returned to the Board of Elections by 12:00 noon on the day before the election.

Housekeeping services Based on the individual's income, Medicaid will pay all or part of the cost of housekeeper, homemaker or home attendant services for the applicant whose doctor authorizes such care.

Anyone receiving Medicaid, public assistance, Social Security, SSI or Medicaid Surplus Income can be eligible for home services through the **Office of Case Intake and Management** (OCIM), 250 Church Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 553-6395).

Three types of home care services are available:

- Housekeeper: a part-time aide who does shopping, cleaning, laundry, cooking, etc., as directed by the participant.
- Homemaker: performs a combination of personal care (feeding dressing, bathing) and household services, money management and nutrition.
- Home attendant: is primarily concerned with personal care, working either part or full time in conjunction with a housekeeper.

Anna Kaufman Moon

Village Visiting Neighbors, 371 Avenue of the Americas, in Greenwich Village, now has 80 volunteers visiting 80 homebound people in the neighborhood. (tel. 929-5869).

Project Ezra, Educational Alliance, 197 East Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, arranges for college students to make weekly visits to older persons on the Lower East Side (tel. 982-3700 or 475-6200).

East Midtown Services to Older People, 11 East 29 Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, employs paid, part time senior aides (over 60) to escort, shop and do errands for older homebound residents living between East 23rd and 38th Streets from First to Fifth Avenues (tel. 889-1620).

American Red Cross Telephone Club has older volunteers telephone lonely or homebound people about once a week (tel. 787-1000, ext. 480).

Help Line Telephone Center is a service offering information, referral and conversation. Although not specifically for older people, the service can help with the particular problems of the elderly (tel. 481-1070).

Human Resources Administration's (HRA) Telephone Reassurance Service for the elderly or handicapped receiving public assistance or Medicaid. Volunteers have regular telephone contact with the homebound person and offer help in obtaining outside services for specific problems. Call 460-8457 or 460-8458 for information.

United Neighborhood Houses Telephone Reassurance Program, 101 East 15 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003, is a service provided by ten settlement houses in New York City. Volunteers of all ages make calls to older homebound people (tel. 677-0300, ext. 8).

Meals on Wheels is a program that provides meals for older homebound persons. Under Title XX or Title VII grants, local senior citizens centers with lunch programs deliver meals to those in the neighborhood who cannot come to the center.

A group can supply the volunteers instead of the center using its paid or volunteer staff to deliver the meals.

Early Alert *See Chapter 2,* "Self Protection."

Household modification

For the handicapped person attempting a return to a more normal life in his own apartment after a stay in an institution or hospital, and for the recent victim of old age frailties—stroke, arthritis, palsy, broken bones—even the simplest of activities can prove awesome.

While homemaker, housekeeper or visiting nurse service will aid the older handicapped person through this period of readjustment, taking care of both his medical and physical needs, the living environment should be modified to assure as much comfort and independence as the older person might have taken for granted prior to his illness.

For those confined to a wheelchair and living in a house, a ramp can be easily constructed either over existing stairs or adjacent to them allowing for easy access to the outdoors. Apartment buildings without elevators will obviously prove impractical for the person in a wheelchair unless his apartment is on the first floor and a ramp or another simple method of exit and entry can be arranged with the super.

As for living quarters within the home or apartment, following are some modifications that can be made by a helpful relative or friend or through some of the cooperative exchange projects listed in *Chapter 5*:

- Lower shelves and clothing rods in closets.
- Lower door locks and pulls for shades or drapes.
- Lower medicine cabinet, kitchen cabinets/counters, if landlord will permit.
- Raise electrical outlets, toilet seat and couch or easy chair.
- Tack area rugs to floor to prevent slippage.
- Secure metal bars near toilet, bathtub and bed.
- Sand and grease windows so they slide easily.
- Convert the present intercom system for inter-apartment use or install a new one.
- Have a telephone extension in the bathroom, since accidents occur more frequently there, and the handicapped person will be able to call for help.
- Tape emergency numbers next to phone or inside refrigerator door.
- Winterize by sealing holes and cracks near doors, windows and pipes. To keep moisture in the air and prevent colds during winter months, place pans of water near radiators. Dust blocks heat, so vacuum radiators, forced air systems and filters.
- Attach a piece of wood to act as an extension of the handle on the incinerator door.
- Fix a bicycle basket to a walker or wheelchair so that small items can be carried without encumbrance.
- Place a table, milk crate or chair near outside doors to rest packages on.

Michael Cala

4 • Consumer education projects

- Fraud
- Comparative shopping survey
- Memorial societies
- Utility costs and savings tips
- Resources for consumer protection

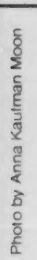


Photo by Anna Kaufman Moon

Nothing is more beautiful than cheerfulness in an old face.

Jean-Paul Richter

Prior to World War II, food was the most expensive item in a family budget. Now, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, food is the second most costly part of the family budget while shelter has assumed first place.

To reduce shelter cost, a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption form or a Real Property Tax Reduction form can be filed. Information on applications and eligibility can be found under "Housing" in the *Appendix* section of this book.

Food costs can be reduced or significantly altered through joining a food co-op or buying club, (discussed in Chapter 5, Cooperatives) taking part in a community vegetable garden (*See Chapter 6*, Urban Gardening) or through utilizing good shopping techniques and consumer product knowledge.

As for the cost of everyday goods and services, a senior citizen discount shopping program can be helpful *(See Appendix)*. In the realm of protection for the unsuspecting

consumer, various types of fraud will be discussed in this chapter as will budget-saving programs such as the comparative shopping survey and memorial societies. Consumer resource services are also listed.

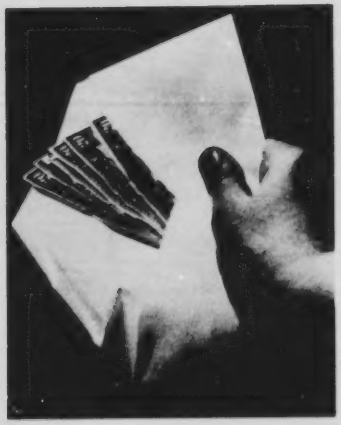
Fraud

This term covers everything from the parking lot come-on, "Hey, buddy, wanna buy a watch?" to the many more sophisticated schemes that bilk consumers of millions annually. Unfortunately, if we didn't have a little bit of larceny in us or if we could simply pass up the proverbial "good deal" without a second thought, all con artists would be out of work.

Fraud also covers what advertisers do when they announce ridiculous special prices on merchandise and then either steer the consumer away from the advertised merchandise because it is shoddy or because "we don't have it in stock."

Following is a partial list of the most popular frauds, either perpetrated by con artists or by commercial establishments themselves. Hopefully, knowledge of these "scams" will alert readers to the pitfalls.

- A man walks into a beauty salon announcing that he has "hot" (stolen) color televisions which he is selling for $150 each. Since the merchandise is hot, he cannot show the purchaser where they are, he says, but if he is given the money, he will return in two hours with the merchandise. Of course, he never shows.
- Someone knocks at a homeowner's door and says that he can repave the cracked asphalt driveway "for a song" because he has material left over from another job. Often, the seller will coat the existing drive with oil, making it look as if the complete driveway was repaved.
- The "handkerchief switch" is an unbelievable scam which requires the gullibility of the victim in order to succeed. It works like this: two people, usually women, separate at a parking lot. One will engage a potential victim in conversation, asking directions; the other will come up to the two, announce nervously that she has found a large sum of money and that she doesn't know what to do with it. The second con artist will say that her boss is an attorney and that



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she will call him for advice. Predictably, the "boss" will say that the money probably belongs to a bookie or some other illegal type and that if the money is given to the police it will only be turned over to the state. "Let's divide the money," the con artists say, drawing the victim into their plans.

In return for being allowed to share the money, the victim must first put up some of her own money as a sign of good faith. After the money is withdrawn and the cons place it in with the "found money" for the victim to hold until later, the real money—including the victim's—is switched with an envelope or handkerchief filled with paper. The victim is pleased that she is holding all that money for division. . . only to find that she is holding worthless paper.

Last year alone, this fraud cheated New Yorkers—many of them older persons—of over $60,000, wiping out the life savings of those who could least afford it.

- It is unfortunate that compassion is often repaid with villainy. The following scheme involves two accomplices who stop in front of someone's home. One of them will visibly "faint" while the other assumes the role of concerned friend. The friend will usually beg the victim to help him or her move the "patient" indoors. If the victim agrees—and he or she usually does—then, once inside the victim's home, the two will either ransack the apartment or even attack the victim.

The list goes on and on. The cardinal rule in avoiding such victimization is to restrain all greedy impulses by remembering that there is no "free lunch." Another rule, sadly, is to trust no one.

Commercial fraud Fraud and overcharges perpetrated by business establishments are often not as overtly larcenous as those worked by con artists, but they can have the same disastrous financial effects. Following are some of the more glaring problems which consumers must deal with, as well as a listing of remedial consumer protection resources (additional resources are listed at end of chapter).

- Unordered merchandise. The company continues to bill and harass the consumer until forced to stop. Contact the

Department of Consumer Affairs, 80 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 964-7777) or the local postal inspector; more information can be obtained from the U.S. Post Office Department, Washington D.C. 20260.

- Utility overbilling. Consumers should know their account numbers as well as specific amounts charged. Contact the **Public Service Commission,** Two World Trade Center, New York, N.Y. 10047, or call:
  488-4390 (General Information)
  488-4332 (Electric)
  488-4353 (Water)
  488-4392 (Gas)
  488-5330 (Telephone)
- False advertising by employment agencies (jobs advertised don't exist). Contact the **New York City Department of Licenses,** 80 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 566-5360).
- False advertising in business, misleading ads, unfair credit contracts. Contact the **Federal Trade Commission,** 26 Federal Plaza, 22nd Floor, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 264-1207, English and Spanish-speaking), or the **Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Fraud,** Two World Trade Center, New York, N.Y. 10048 (tel. 488-7530).
- Finance company overcharges, threats of physical reprisal and property liens. Certain finance companies and collection agencies are noted for their unethical behavior, including the notification of employers before judgements have been legally obtained for garnishees. Visit the **Legal Aid Society,** 11 Park Place, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 227-2755). Try to get there before 9:00 a.m. and bring any pertinent documentation such as contracts, receipts, warrantees, etc.
- Age discrimination. Contact the **New York City Human Rights Commission,** 52 Duane Street, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 566-5050).
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions in homes, apartment buildings, restaurants, etc. Contact the New York City Department of Health's **Central Complaint Unit,** 125 Worth Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 566-7726-7-8-9).

Photo by Michael Cala

People living on fixed incomes particularly feel the impact of high food costs. Involving local older adults in a comparative shopping survey will benefit them and other residents.

To set it up:

- Organize a group of volunteers from block associations, church groups, parents organizations, senior citizens centers, etc., to discuss shopping surveys and to raise money for stationery and printing expenses. Set a schedule for surveys and follow-up meetings.
- Decide which goods and services to compare (e.g., food or drugs, shoe or T.V. repair, laundromats).
- Prepare a guide for shoppers. An example follows:

Supermarket Survey

Item	Size	Store Price				
		A	B	C	D	E
Milk	Quart					
Eggs, Large, White	1 doz.					
Domino Sugar*	2 lbs.					
Gold Medal Flour*	2 lbs.					
Heinz Ketchup*	10 oz.					

***Use specific brand names and same sizes even though stores may not carry all items in all sizes.**

Shoppers may also note whether the store is clean or the aisles overcrowded; whether there are enough check-out counters open; whether stores deliver; the hours they are open; whether the staff is polite and helpful.

- Always compare *the same* items and brand names in different stores—(chunk white tuna in the same size can, for example).
- Prepare a newsletter or mimeo sheet to be distributed to all residents and to the merchants surveyed as quickly as possible after the survey is completed. For a fair comparison all information should be collected within the same week.

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs, *80 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (tel. 964-7777), can provide information and advice on conducting market surveys. The Department also has a resource library that is available to the public. In addition, the survey groups should share the results of their work with them.*

The Consumer Law Training Center, *New York Law School, 57 Worth Street, New York, N.Y. 10013, can provide written information on "How to Conduct a Market Survey."*

Forming a memorial society

Michael Cala

The concept of the memorial society originated in San Francisco in the late 1950's and is similar to a buying club in which the membership and their families deal with one or two particular merchants for the purpose of receiving a discount price. Since funeral services often cost survivors upwards of $2000 and are usually arranged for immediately after death, the pre-planning aspects of forming a memorial society insure that the worry of funeral arrangements ("Who will take care of my funeral?") and the price-gouging by many funeral directors will be avoided.

When planning a memorial society, coordinators should perform the basic research of service pricing and will be assisted in this by writing to the **Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies,** 1828 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The memorial society can be formed by an existing group or can be started for the express purpose of beginning the society. A group member can volunteer to try to find an agreeable funeral director, stressing the needs of the members (cremation, for example, or orthodox Jewish burial). Each group member should fill out a form to this effect and this information should be kept on file either with the funeral director or with next of kin.

For those wishing to join an existing memorial society, the Community Funeral Society *will provide help in funeral preparation, suggest a list of reasonably-priced funeral directors, provide forms which will be kept by the member or next of kin and then turned over to the selected funeral director at time of death. After the director receives notice, he will handle the entire funeral service at a pre-arranged price. The Community Funeral Society charges $10 for individual lifetime memberships and $15 for family membership. Call or write The Community Funeral Society, 40 East 35 Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 683-4988).*

Utility costs and savings tips

All readers of this handbook are customers of utility companies and as consumers are entitled to know all they can about how to save money in the use of power and how to conserve energy, a precious commodity.

Even though utility rates have risen along with the cost of living generally, the power companies do try to assist their customers in determining the accuracy of billing procedures, how to conserve energy and what to do in emergencies.

Con Edison provides electricity to all New Yorkers and gas to those living in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens. It offers a wealth of booklets designed to help consumers learn how they can cut down on electric usage and still live comfortably. Topics stressed in their publications run the gamut from "Understanding Your Bill," "Using Electricity Safely" and "How Much Is It Costing to Run Your Appliances" to "Home Insulation." They will also supply speakers to groups on the above and similar topics. (See next section)

Of special interest to older people is Con Edison's billing practice designed to give an added protection to those living on fixed incomes. Sometimes, a Social Security, pension or SSI check arrives late—too late to pay the electric bill on time. Late payments accumulate until the customer receives a turn-off notice or a request for a deposit.

Older people who receive such notices can call or visit their nearest Con Edison office to arrange a modified payment plan until all outstanding bills are brought up to date.

Manhattan 473-6262
Bronx 520-2200
Brooklyn 855-6150
Queens 461-3344
Staten Island 727-4600

The company also makes provisions for those customers who must maintain life-sustaining equipment in their homes or apartments. These may be iron lungs, respirators, suction pumps, electrically-powered beds for the bedridden or even refrigerators, a very necessary appliance for diabetics who need to keep insulin cooled.

Con Edison should be notified that such vital equipment is in use so that in the event of a service interruption, for example,

special assistance can be provided. This measure also precludes a power shut-off for nonpayment *(See above).*

Older people should also know that Con Edison gives them the option of having a friend or relative receive a notice of pending suspension of electrical services. This is especially helpful in the event a person has to enter the hospital unexpectedly or is away for an extended period of time. The person designated—the "third party"—will get in touch with the person and perhaps assist in clearing up the difficulty. He or she will not, of course, be made responsible for the unpaid bill.

To do this, ask for a "Third Party" form by calling or visiting one of the Con Ed offices listed above.

Brooklyn Union also has a third party notification system wherein a relative, friend, clergyman or social service agency can be listed with Brooklyn Union Gas to receive a duplicate copy of notice of impending cancellation of service. Not only is this useful to travelers or to the hospitalized, but can also make the difference between life and death if an older person is unaware that service is being terminated—which can happen during the winter months. This notification of the third party is for informational purposes only; it has nothing to do with payment, since it only means that someone in addition to the customer is notified of impending cancellation of service.

To find out as much as possible about gas consumption, customers of Brooklyn Union Gas Company (for residents of Brooklyn and South Queens—all other areas in New York City are served by Con Ed) can write to them for the free publication, "The Welcome Booklet," which tells how to read gas bills, provides energy-saving tips, budget payment plan options and the addresses of authorized places to pay gas bills. Write: Brooklyn Union Gas, 195 Montague Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 or call 643-2400. Specify whether the English or Spanish language edition is requested.

If there is a gas smell coming from somewhere in the house or apartment, or from the street, call Brooklyn Union's 24-hour emergency number, 643-4050, and a crew will be out immediately to investigate.

Michael Cala

Telephone service, like the other utilities, is also rather expensive. By sending for the New York Telephone Company's free booklet, "How To Read Your Local Usage Detail List," consumers will find out the least expensive times to make calls.

There is also a special rate available for those who make few outgoing calls but who need to own a telephone for emergencies and incoming calls. Call the telephone number on the bill for further information.

Home heating accounts for the largest amount of energy consumed in the average household during the winter months. Since energy consumption is very expensive—even prohibitive, especially to people living on fixed incomes—following are some energy-saving tips which will prove useful in conserving fuel while at the same time providing heating comfort.

For maximum efficiency, furnaces should be cleaned at regular intervals, preferably every one or two years. This allows the furnace to operate at peak efficiency, thereby extracting more energy from less fuel. Also, heating fixtures (radiators, heat risers, ducts, etc.) should be vacuumed regularly since dust blocks heat. In forced-air heating systems, the filter should be cleaned monthly. To maximize performance of radiators, they should be "bled" at the beginning of each heating season. Bleeding means that any air in the hot water heating system should be removed. This is done by opening the air valve on the side of the radiator until water begins to leak out.

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Caulking is a low-cost way to block up cracks and holes around doors and windows which allow precious heat to escape. Beginning in the fall (since caulk must be applied in temperatures not below 50° Farenheit), examination can be made in the house or apartment by passing one's hand around the edges of window and door frames—if a breeze is coming in, then it is time to begin caulking, a procedure which should only take an hour or two, dependent on the amount of work to be done.

Large holes around doors and windows should first be filled with oakum, a rope-like material, before caulking. It is important to use a high-quality caulk, one that will

not dry out too quickly and which will last for several years. After applying the caulk from the caulking gun, it should be smoothed by hand for a neater appearance.

Weatherstripping Usually made of felt and supplied in rolls, this material is excellent in blocking up drafts from the separation between tops and bottoms of doors and their frames; in windows which are not seated properly (a common problem, especially in older, double-hung windows); around air conditioners and outside-vented exhaust fans.

Insulated drapery Lined fiberglass drapes, when mounted floor-to-ceiling against exterior walls—especially those containing several windows—are an effective way to combat the cooling effect of cold walls in winter and their heating effect in summer.

For homeowners able to make repairs, or as part of a service exchange project (See Chapter 5), there are more expensive ways to insure maximum energy utilization and a minimum of wasted energy. In older homes, for example, ceilings tend to be higher than in newer homes (nine or ten, or even twelve feet, as compared to a modest eight feet) and, because heat rises, occupants freeze while their ceilings stay warm and toasty. In an apartment house or multi-floor dwelling, the tenant above is usually grateful because you are warming his floors. By dropping the ceiling, usually with a form of insulated wallboard, the heat will not have so far to rise. Another way is to install a flue-heat recovery device or even a multi-temperature thermostat with sensors designed to cut back automatically on furnace use. The above suggestions, however, can be expensive.

More reasonably, it might be wise to gradually lower thermostat temperatures so that, over a period of weeks, an average temperature five or six points lower than before will seem comfortable and at the same time save much energy.

Electricity A common-sense approach to the usage of home electrical power will help consumers in keeping down the cost of electricity bills. By assessing the power consumption of various appliances (toasters, for example, or space heaters), consumers should be able to judge what not to use or alter their usage to maximize both comfort and savings.

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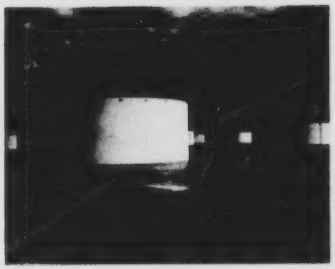
Lighting A simple rule to remember when lighting a room or apartment is: using one 100-watt bulb is more efficient than using two 50-watt bulbs. When lighting a room, consumers should keep in mind what activities will be carried on in that room, and light accordingly. If, for example, the room is used a great deal for reading or television watching, what is required is perhaps one high-intensity lamp (the adjustable, goose-neck or extension variety) placed near or behind the chair or table used for reading. For television watching, a standing floor lamp, which bounces the power of a single 100-watt lamp from the ceiling and provides a soft, even illumination, is very economical and comfortable. Of course, if vision is poor, or if special tasks are to be performed (a job or hobby requiring strong lighting—electronics repair, for example—should be lit accordingly) then additional lighting is required. But this should be maximized by using one fixture instead of two or three.

Heating If possible, the use of electrical space heaters should be avoided, except in emergencies (when furnace is out, for example) because they are large consumers of power. Sometimes, space heaters are used because a portion of a room or apartment is drafty; this might be caused by poor caulking or cracks around windows and doors (See Heating section). It is by far cheaper to remedy these drafts by mechanical means (caulking or the installation of insulated drapery) than by using a space heater.

Cooking As in the assessment of lighting and heating needs, the question should be: Is this (appliance) necessary? For example, does white bread have to be toasted for each of three daily meals (or more) or will the substitution of whole-wheat or rye bread provide the flavor so lacking in untoasted, starchy white bread? Toasters—and anything that requires the heating of coils or filaments such as broilers—consume a great deal of power. Also, refrigerators which have "Frost Free" features are more expensive to operate than those which do not have that feature. In addition, these appliances should be scaled to use: is that Volkswagen-sized refrigerator-freezer really necessary, or would a smaller, defrost-type unit be more economical? Despite what the



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manufacturers say, defrosting a refrigerator is no big deal and does not require "hours of drudgery." Also, for maximum refrigeration, refrigerators must be filled or nearly so—a half-empty unit is uneconomical. This should be kept in mind when it is time for the purchase of a new unit.

Entertainment Increasingly, television is a way of life for many of us and can provide pleasure and information. However, because we tend to take television for granted, it is usually left operating even when no one is watching—as kind of a "background noise." This can become expensive, especially in the use of color televisions, which require more electrical consumption than their black-and-white counterparts.

Consumers should also realize, when purchasing both radios and televisions, that transistorized, solid-state appliances are more efficient than the older, hot-tube varieties. For the most part, the era of "tube sets" is past, but many times retail outlets and department stores offer "specials" on these anachronisms. These "bargains" should be passed up—not only because of higher maintenance costs (tubes do have to be replaced, after all, whereas transistors last forever) but also because of the increased power consumption of these units. Gadgety features—such as "instant-on" televisions, should be avoided because they can be unsafe (instant on means that power is constantly being supplied to the set) and because they only increase power consumption for the dubious convenience of not having to wait thirty seconds for the picture tube to light up.

By consuming power judiciously, consumers will find that such an intelligent approach will, indeed, save money. Being economical, however, does not mean being foolish. It is still necessary to use lighting and noise in an apartment to give the illusion of its being occupied when, in fact, it is not. It is, in the long run, more "economical" to leave lamps burning in windows visible to the street and to leave a loud radio playing—since these tricks will often dissuade burglars—than to save kilowatts and invite vandalism.

Any of the books and pamphlets discussed in the previous sections are available at local branches of the utilities.

Resources for consumer protection

New York University Law School and WNET Channel 13 co-sponsor a **Consumer Help Center** (tel. 262-5555) during the academic year. Complaints or requests may be addressed to 356 West 58 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

The **Better Business Bureau** will provide speakers on many topics connected with consumerism. Call 533-7500 to make arrangements.

The **Metropolitan Council on Housing** will provide community groups with speakers on housing laws, rent control, tenants' rights, organizing a tenants' association and related topics. For further information and to arrange for a speaker call 725-4800, or write: 24 West 30 Street, New York, N.Y. 10009.

The **Legal Aid Society** gives free legal advice and representation in civil matters to those who cannot afford an attorney. Eligibility requirements are strict and seeking help often requires long waits. For more information and for the location of the nearest office, call 577-3300.

Brooklyn Office for the Aged is a special Legal Aid office for people 60 and over who live in Brooklyn. Older people must have a limited income but the level for eligibility is slightly higher than at other Legal Aid offices. Home visits are made only in exceptional cases. For an appointment, call 645-3111. The office is located at 1685 East 15 Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229.

Bronx Legal Services Corporation-Office of the Elderly handles civil cases for Bronx residents 60 and over living on fixed incomes. Persons near 60 with cases concerning retirement or related matters will also be served. Negligence or other fee-generating cases will be handled for advice only. For information, referral or appointment call 731-9100. The office is located at 159 East Tremont Avenue (half a block west of the Grand Concourse) on the second floor.

Community Action for Legal Services (CALS) provides free legal advice to those who cannot afford a private attorney. For information and the location of the nearest office, call 431-7200.

Legal Services for the Elderly Poor, 2095 Broadway, New York, N.Y. works on class action and discrimination cases in matters of concern to the aged. For information call 595-1340.

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Nutrition

The **Department of Health** will provide speakers on nutritional topics if requests are sent in writing to the Bureau of Nutrition, 93 Worth Street, Room 714, New York, N.Y. 10013. Be sure to include the name and nature of the group requesting the speaker and the date and time of the meeting. Give an alternate date as well. For further information, call 566-6022 or 6023.

Cornell Cooperative Extension will supply a nutritionist to speak on nutritional topics as well as urban garden specialists to teach how to grow food. Call 267-1460 or 237-0920.

The Metropolitan Dairy Council makes free film loans on nutrition and conducts workshops on how to start a nutrition club in a senior center or group. For information write the Council at 60 East 42 Street, Room 1235, New York, N.Y. 10017, or call 682-7961.

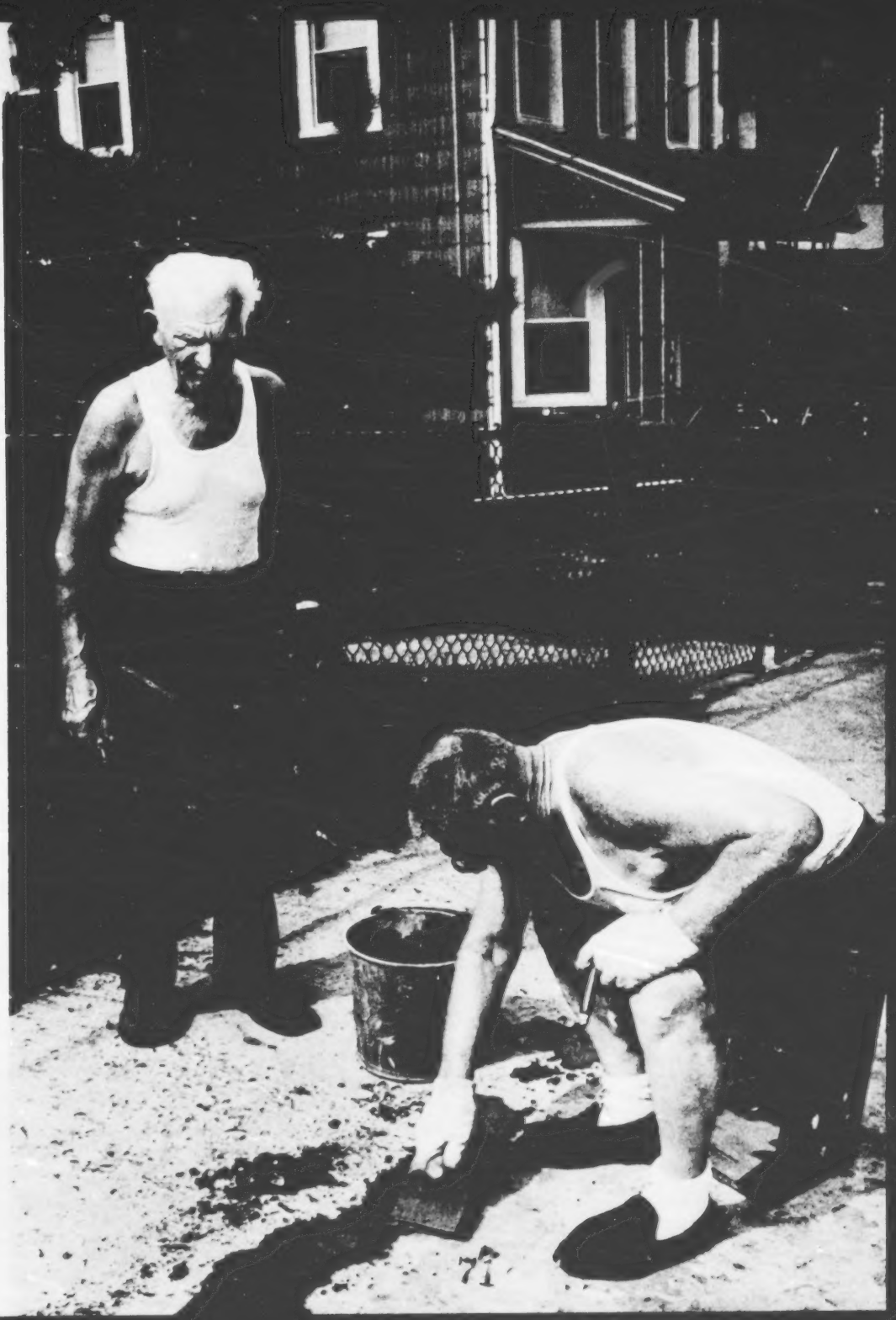
Tax-Aide Program

Volunteer members of the **American Association of Retired Persons** help older taxpayers prepare their returns and assist with the special tax problems that often come with retirement. All older people are invited to make use of the service or to volunteer as tax counselors. Tax-Aide counselors attend training sessions conducted by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and should be prepared to commit a minimum of three hours a week to the program during tax filing season. People interested in participating in the Tax-Aide Program as a counselor should contact Peter McNaulty at 758-1411. The Tax-Aide Program functions from February 1 to May 1 at about 50 locations throughout the city.

Utilities

Con Edison will supply speakers to talk about electric bills and discuss individual problems, energy, consumer education and nutrition. Films are also available. State topic preference when calling. Manhattan . . . 460-6056, Bronx . . . 579-1458, Queens . . . 670-6315, Brooklyn . . . 834-3352, Staten Island . . . 390-7215.

New York Telephone Company will send out speakers to talk about the telephone company, telephone bills, Operation Sail, etc. State topic when applying. Call 394-3957.



5 • Cooperative and exchange projects

- Service and skills exchange
- Babysitting exchange
- Food buying club
- Minor repair co-op
- Specialty exchanges

Photo by Anne Fanciullo

To remain in optimal health, old people need what people need: work to do, money to live on, a place to live in, and other people to care whether they live or die. At present, they tend to get denied some or all of these by virtue of age.

Alex Comfort

The exchanging of skills and the pooling of personal and professional resources is a way for people to help themselves at a time when government is not doing so and when the dollar buys less and must be stretched well beyond its limits.

The idea of joint effort for mutual aid is an old one. The earliest forms of human organization—tribes—depended for their very existence on working for the common good. Some members assumed the roles of hunters and protectors, for example, providing food and safety from predators while others divided labor at the campsite. This work division enabled all tribal members to share equally in the vital activities and responsibilities of group life.

This sense of kinship reliance remained somewhat intact throughout human history, surviving transplanting and modification by the various ethnic cultures until the early twentieth century. But with the increasing shift

toward urbanization and mass production there came a distinct change. No longer did those migrating to the cities from the country make butter or clothing for their own consumption, for their families, a larger kin group or for use in barter with their neighbors; they worked in factories and were themselves involved in mass production. No longer did people rely upon themselves or their families to produce goods and provide services necessary for survival. Goods could now be bought, as could the services of others.

It would, of course, be foolhardy to suggest a return to barter economy. It is a blessing for most people not to have to spend days making clothing or preserving food for winter. On the other hand, the secondary effects of those endeavors—group effort and cohesiveness—have been, for the most part, lost.

In an extended family or neighborhood setting, labor was traditionally divided so that each generational and family group had some of its needs met by the other. Older family members who began to lose mobility and could no longer perform chores as they did when younger, for example, had those duties taken care of by younger family members; likewise, younger people came to depend upon the specialized skills, counseling and child rearing abilities of older family and group members.

What better way then, for neighbors who live alone or with members of the same generation, to recapture a sense of intergenerational family and kinship, of mutual self-help, than through cooperative effort and service and skills exchange?

Service and skills exchange

People regularly exchange skills and services with their friends and relatives, but these exchanges are oftentimes determined by the limits of friendship and family ties. Usually performed on a one-to-one basis, participants in these exchanges are often not even conscious of the regularity of these mutually beneficient activities and perform them simply because they care for the persons they are exchanging with and are reacting to a perceived need.

Through the formation of a conscious group-exchange program or building upon what already exists, the boundaries for possible service exchange are infinitely expanded since more people, having more and varied skills, are involved.

The bringing together of those interested in pooling skills and resources is a productive way to get people to know other people; to depend less on formal service providers (Medicaid-paid housekeepers, for example), and to rely less on money and more on an even exchange of services and abilities. And the fact that virtually everything we do or need done can be exchanged—cooking, carpentry, sewing, tax preparation, babysitting, shopping, letter writing, dog walking—is an incentive to begin such a project.

Michael Cala

To set it up:

- Through the distribution of leaflets or flyers (*See Chapter 1, "Publicity"*) announce the formation of a skills exchange or begin talking to neighbors who might be interested in such a mutually beneficient project.
- Distribute index cards to interested members, asking them to list the skill they wish to exchange (shopping or carpentry, for example) as well as what they need to have done.
- Place these cards in a file box and make sure they are available to all members, perhaps by asking a member to volunteer his time in allowing others to browse through the box of cards in his possession.

A variation on the services and skills exchange is one that is very successful in Evanston, Illinois. There, a learning exchange group set up an office with a telephone (the "office," in any case, can be a member's apartment). As callers phone they announce what they want to learn, and what they are able to teach. Both these facts are noted on index cards, which are then filed with the person's name and phone number. The Learning Exchange, through telephone contact, matches callers by handing out their phone numbers. The callers, in turn, call other people interested in a particular area with a matching skill to exchange, and arrangements are made concerning dates, places and times.

Babysitting exchange

A babysitting exchange is a specific project in that one half of the potential participants knows what it wants (parents want babysitters). The other half, which can be older adults, works out an arrangement with the parents in terms of monetary or skills and service exchange, or a combination of the two.

In a mutually beneficient arrangement, parents who must go shopping can drop their children off at an older person's home and the children will be minded while the parents perform their own, as well as the older person's shopping chores.

To set it up:

- Announce through leaflets or posted notices that the exchange is going into effect, giving a brief description of the project as well as a telephone number for potential babysitters and parents to call.
- Make a list of all potential babysitters. Include their addresses, phone numbers, the times they are available to sit, whether they prefer to have the child brought to their house or will go to the parents' home, whether they prefer younger or older children and what they want in exchange for their babysitting.
- Make a list of all interested parents. Include addresses and phone numbers, how many children they have and what ages they are, what time of day they would like a sitter, whether they can drop their child(ren) off at the sitter's, what they are willing to pay or do in exchange and what household pets there are.
- Match up sitters with parents, giving each parent two potential sitters to call. They should make the specific arrangements themselves, but should report results to the group.
- Parents should provide favorite toys and games and keep the babysitting period down to three hours at most. Also keep in mind that more than two children could be a strain for some older people.
- Follow up the first several exchanges, making sure that both parties have lived up to their sides of the agreement.

Anna Kaufman Moon

The group will serve as a clearinghouse, referring parents to sitters, or the members themselves can keep their own records and set up a revolving secretary system to handle the match-up function. Anyone (either sitter or parent) found to be unreliable should be dropped from the program.

Food buying club

Family life contains many elements of cooperation – from "chipping in" on a large, expensive gift to bringing cold cuts or beer to a barbeque. Taking cooperative buying one

step further and expanding it to an entire block or community, the food buying club is based on this very principle.

The food buying club offers participants a way to purchase orders in bulk, assures lower prices and eliminates the need for any individual to buy more than he needs or can use. Also, quality food and the friendships resulting from the cooperative experience are equally good reasons to start such a project.

Essentially, there are three basic types of food buying clubs:

- "Pot luck" – all members share in co-op work, pool a set amount of money and buyers use their own judgement in purchasing.
- "Preorder/prepaid" – all members contribute time, order food listed on order sheets and pay for the items ordered based on the previous week's price list. Orders and money are handled at the same time and shoppers use order forms for purchasing.
- "Preorder/pay on pick-up" – members order from sheets and pay for items at distribution.

To set it up:

- Determine the task sections. Typically they are: the order, the tally, the buy, the receipt and distribution and the pick-up.
- Find out how many are interested in a food buying club and make certain all are willing to pool their skills and the workload, either on a rotating basis or on an assigned, permanent task.
- After each person places an order using the forms provided, all the orders are tallied and the dollar amount is known.
- At the buy – usually the Hunts Point Market – the buyer checks the quality of the items and pays for them with the collected funds.
- At the distribution point, where those whose job it is to pack and bag take over, people coming to pick up their orders can also purchase any left over food or extra items – called "specials" – which the shoppers brought back. At the point of pick-up, the distribution of new order sheets starts the cycle again.

The Riverdale Neighborhood Houses (RNH) Co-op *is an example of a preorder/pre-paid food buying club involving about 60 families who share all the work. To join, the RNH membership fee of $15 annually must be paid as well as a $10 co-op fee which is refundable any time a member leaves the co-op in good standing.*

New members are accepted on the basis of the work needs of the organization. Each member is required to put in two hours of work every three weeks and must go on one buy during the year. From order to pick-up, the process runs from Tuesday to Thursday evening each week.

Minor repair co-op

Often, many people find it financially difficult to call a repairperson for a specific problem or when the repair needed is minor enough not to warrant a service call.

Neighbors often perform repair and maintenance chores for one another on a one-to-one basis, but a greater variety of services is needed. A minor repair cooperative offers a large choice of services to the co-op members and is an excellent way to utilize the dormant skills of some older workers.

Neighborhood people interested in forming a repair co-op come together with neighbors who can meet those needs that can only be alleviated at the expense of calling in paid professionals. In such an arrangement, unskilled labor is equal in value to skilled labor since services are traded or exchanged and not bought.

Michael Cala

For example, a person willing to exchange unskilled manual labor might have his car tuned up by a group member experienced in auto mechanics, while he will help someone else move furniture. The exchange system works on a group basis, so that a service performed by one member for another is credited to the group as a whole. The person receiving the service thus owes the group time and labor in exchange.

Peer recognition within the community is another product of the minor repair co-op which should not be overlooked. The satisfaction of using a skill or talent for the benefit of a neighbor and receiving recognition not only from the person involved but from the group as well makes the individual's service just as valuable as if it were paid for, perhaps more so.

To set it up:

- Make a list of interested neighborhood residents by skill. Include names, address, phone number and any conditions of service (no evenings, Saturdays, for example).
- Make a duplicate list by name, including address, phone number and service credits owed and credits donated.
- A revolving secretary or an individual who is offering secretarial work in exchange for service credit, would keep the records.
- When an individual has a job to be done, requests are called into the secretary for a list of volunteers with the pertinent skills required.
- Details concerning the time and type of work performed are decided by those involved. Both must agree upon the exact number of credit hours the work entails—a debit for the user, a credit for the donor—and arrangements must be made for the service recipient to purchase materials (paint or lumber, for example).
- Records of hours used and donated are to be kept by both the secretary and the individual members.
- A maximum number of debit hours should be decided upon by the group so that no one member becomes too heavily in debt to the group before repayment begins.
- Members can use needed services before accumulating credit as a means of heightening participation and involvement. This should be encouraged especially at the beginning of the co-op.

Following is a partial list of some of the possible exchangeable skills:

- Hanging pictures, shelves, curtains, shades;
- Minor plumbing, such as replacing pipes, installing washers in leaky faucets, unclogging drains;
- Electrical repairs, including rewiring of lamps, replacing lighting switches and fixtures and frayed appliance cords;
- Room painting, plastering, floor sanding, furniture moving, reupholstery, window repair;
- Installing an outdoor television antenna, automobile tune-ups, body work, teaching driving;

- Installation of modification equipment (handrails in bathroom, for example) for disabled neighbors, garden weeding, planting and maintenance.

The list goes on. This repair co-op can be combined with a service and skills exchange and is an ideal way to implement housing adjustments for older people discussed in the homebound section of this book (*See Chapter 3*).

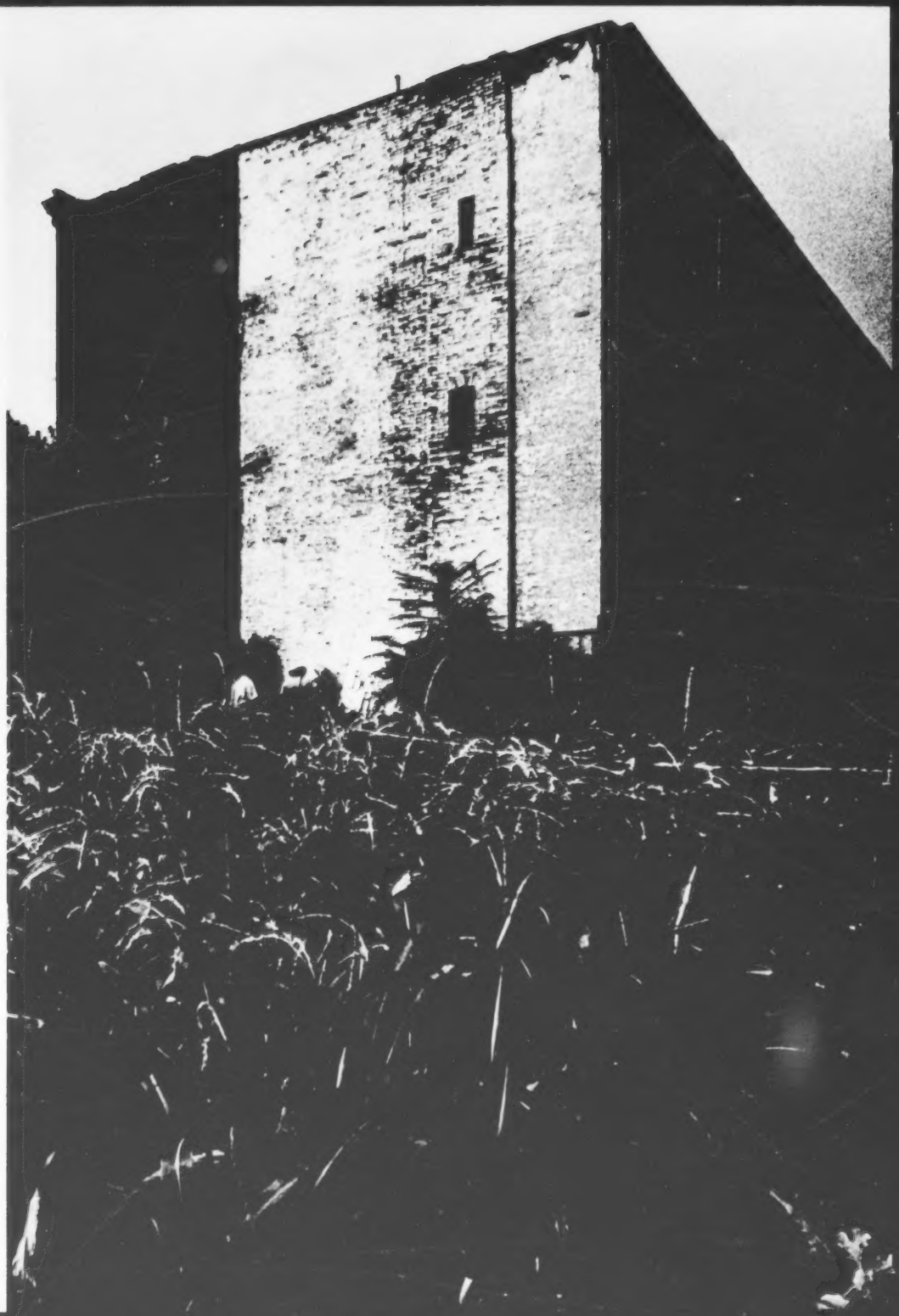
Senior Citizens' Minor Repair Program *in the Bronx (tel. 220-2500) provides paid employees, both young and old, to service older persons unable to do minor repairs themselves. Each repair team is headed by a "senior mechanic" who is an older adult. The repairs are free but a small contribution is requested.*

Specialty exchanges

The limits of service and skills exchanges are defined only by the group's imagination. In an apartment building there are people who read magazines, clip supermarket food coupons, buy books, tools, etc. An exchange program can be set up which will allow participants to read many books and magazines, for example, without having to purchase each item. Likewise, people can clip all food coupons from the newspapers and then swap them in a central pool. A collection of magazines, books or coupons can be made available either in one person's apartment or in a safe building lobby.

Many people are capable of making minor repairs—of furniture, appliances—but often do not have the equipment to do so. If person A wants to sand an oak table but does not have a electric sander, it would make sense to use an exchange sander without having to go out and buy one for an isolated project; if person B needs a set of jeweler's screwdrivers, he likewise can take advantage of the tool exchange without having to spend money.

To set this up, all that is required after announcing the idea is for data to be collected on index cards for members' use. Each person should write on the file card what tools or equipment he/she has and is willing to exchange. As in the previous section, a file box can be centrally located with a volunteer from the group, in a lobby or offices of the building.



6 • Urban gardening

- Community vegetable gardens
- Searching titles
- People's parks
- Rooftop gardening
- Tree care

Neighborhoods are changing. Not just in terms of who lives there, but in physical contours as well. Many areas of the city are experiencing a premature decay. Buildings are being torn down leaving empty lots in their wake; residents are committing arson at an alarming rate; others complete the cycle by moving to the suburbs as neighborhoods fall to a crumbling heap around them.

Hopefully, these trends can be stopped and a community garden—while no simple solution in itself—just might help reverse neighborhood decline and spark a new vitality.

Urban gardening, which includes not only vegetable production for food needs but also neighborhood beautification through the planting of trees and the establishment of "people's parks" in vacant lots or in courtyards, is a way to add a degree of warmth and beauty to a neighborhood.

In the process of organizing such a project, people will

Photo by Michael Cala

find that not only are they filling some of the area's physical needs, but are also beginning to get to know their neighbors. Finding that they share the same interests and feelings eases the isolation that many city dwellers experience. This can, in turn, lead to spin-off efforts related to community or self-help projects.

Community vegetable garden

People have always grown plants, flowers and vegetables for enjoyment. On any summer day in almost every part of the city, pots of flowers and plants can be seen in windows, on stoops and in storefronts. Unfortunately, though, physical space is not always available to each individual who would like to grow more than one or two plants on a window ledge. It is, however, much easier for a group of neighborhood residents to pool their desires for growing a vegetable garden and work collectively toward that end.

Growing a vegetable garden does not mean never having to buy vegetable produce again. What it does mean is that for more than half a year people can work together and reap the benefits of that work while they improve their nutrition. At the same time, they get to know other community people in a sharing way.

The first step in establishing a local community garden is to publicize the beginnings of this project *(See Chapter 1)*. The interested core group should then determine whether there is a vacant lot available or whether it is preferable to begin a rooftop garden. It must be stressed that the community garden is exactly that . . . it is for every member of the community, from the youngest to the very old, for anyone willing to invest whatever time and energy he or she is capable of contributing.

Michael Cala

If the group determines that it is possible to grow a garden in a vacant lot, following are some considerations which will help in deciding where and how to set up a community garden.

- Is the location central to the community and is it within walking and viewing distance of community people?
- Does the intended location have a water source nearby? (For free, the Police Department will provide hook-ups to

a nearby hydrant, or call Cooperative Extension below).

- Is the owner known and does he or she live in the community? Can permission to garden be obtained in writing?
- Is the area fenced or are community people willing to share the cost of buying a fence and installing it?
- Is there a safe place to store tools?
- Is there a knowledgeable coordinator in the group who will suggest what types of plants and what varieties to grow? Or will the plant material have to be donated and advice given from outside sources?
- If the owner of the lot is not known, is the group willing to conduct a title search? If so, the next section will be of assistance.
- Are there several community members willing and able to organize youth groups, coordinate watering and maintenance and keep in contact with suppliers of horticultural information?

Fortunately, many of the above considerations, especially the borrowing of tools, the acquisition of seeds and much horticultural information can be gotten from the Cornell University Cooperative Extension Program. Teams of experienced staffers will work closely with gardening groups to supply tools on a loan basis, help get clearance to use a vacant lot and provide seed material, booklets and advice for the asking.

The Cornell Extension Program also provides an urban gardening specialist to speak to groups of eight or more persons on the subject of starting a vegetable garden. A nutritionist is also available.

For information and to establish a liaison, write to **Cooperative Extension, New York City Programs,** Room 618, 30 Third Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. (tel. 237-0920, 267-1460).

The Council on the Environment also supplies speakers on the community gardening topic, conducts workshops and helps individuals start their own gardens. Write: Open Space Greening Program, 51 Chambers Street, Room 228, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 566-0990).

It must be stated that many groups wishing to begin a community garden discard the idea as soon as someone mentions vandalism. "Why should we do all that work," they ask, "only to have it ripped off by thieves in the middle of the night?"

Michael Cala

In its years of existence, the Cooperative Extension has found that vandalism of community gardens is minimal or virtually nonexistent. The reasons for this are simple: besides maintaining minimal security from baseballs, animals and unwary walkers by erecting a fence, a community garden that has been toiled over by a large segment of a neighborhood will be protected by that neighborhood. Wherever community gardens have been established, gardeners spend much time at the site, monitoring growth, weeding and socializing. Further, when people are at home, they periodically look outside "just to check up" on the garden. Since everyone in the neighborhood is getting to know everyone else—in effect a "blockwatcher" activity—vandalism is discouraged by the project's very existence.

How to search a vacant lot title

Determine the street address of the lot, if possible. This can be done by looking at the street address of the building next to the lot. If, for example, the lot is between street numbers 36 and 44, the street address of the lot is probably 40. Also make note of the location of the lot, i.e., "the southeast corner of the intersection of Avenue B and Highvale Avenue. . ."

- Go to the borough tax registry office with the address of the lot:

Manhattan
100 Municipal Bldg.
New York, N.Y. 10007
Bronx
160 East 162 Street
Bronx, N.Y. 10457
Brooklyn
Municipal Bldg.
Corner of Court and Joralemon Streets
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
Queens
90-27 Sutpkin Blvd.
Queens, N.Y. 11435
Staten Island
350 St. Mark's Place
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301

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- Get the lot and block number of the lot and then look up the owner's name in the tax register (ask the clerk at the office for assistance).
- Contact the owner and stress the positive aspects of having the community develop what is probably a neighborhood eyesore. It might also be suggested that the lot is a greater hazard now, especially for children who play amidst the rubble and for residents of adjacent dwellings who object to the unsafe and potentially unhealthy conditions of the property.

  The owner might also be convinced that it would be in his best interests as a landlord to provide fencing, even if he won't allow the community group to use his property.
- Consider liability—that is, what if someone gets hurt or badly injured on the community garden property? Certainly, the owner of the lot does not want to be held responsible. To get around this problem, provided the landlord is willing, the group can take out an insurance policy in its own name or each member using the garden can sign a waiver of liability. This would free the landlord from responsibility in case of personal injury to the gardeners.
- If the landlord is listed in the tax register as *City of New York*, a permit application may be made by writing to **The Department of Real Estate,** City of New York, Two Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10007.

People's parks

Community residents might decide that, instead of using a vacant lot for just half a year to grow vegetables and then have it remain useless for the remainder, it might be more feasible to start a community park—either in and of itself or in conjunction with a vegetable garden. In this way, neighborhood people will have had the satisfaction of knowing that it is truly "their" park. Some ideas:

- As with the vegetable garden, the vacant lot will have to be cleared. At a community meeting, it might be decided who the park should be designed for. Is it necessary to provide space for little children to play, such as sandboxes, or with toys and safe, stationary constructions? Or do the older residents want a place to congregate, socialize or

There are people whose watch stops at a certain hour and who remain permanently at that age

Saint-Beuve

Photo by Michael Cala

play games like bocci or horseshoes? While this idea might seem too expensive, in actuality it is not.

- The group should meet to discuss plans for the park lay-out and what should be planted.
- Taking all the seasons and the park's uses into account, it might be decided to purchase seeds or started plants for a year-round ground cover (i.e. creeping juniper or many varieties of ivy) which will add color and warmth even in winter.
- If the pocket park is adjacent to a large wall, a mural or other graphic display will heighten visual interest and at the same time cleverly disguise a worn building.
- As for games such as bocci and horseshoes, the courts are easy to make since all they require are two-by-four-inch boards around the periphery of the court area. The boards don't have to be prime wood and can be purchased cheaply from a local lumber yard. Or perhaps the merchant will donate the wood for the courts as well as for park benches and tables if the project is described to him and community enthusiasm is evident.
- All residents should be encouraged to help establish and use the park while coordinators should make sure that no one group monopolizes it. Since older people will want to use the park and are often fearful of the depredations of local youth, it might be useful to establish ground rules as to what the park should be used for. Sports—like baseball or football, for example—might be discouraged as they require too much space and may interfere with the activities of others in the park.

Like the community garden, the park will belong to all residents and so it is reasonable to assume that the same anti-vandalism vigilance will prevail as residents take a personal, proprietary interest in their park.

Michael Cala

The Green Thumb Environmental Beautification Service, *74 Main Street, Stamford, New York 12167, employs older, limited income adults in all parts of the state. They plant, clear lots, paint and do carpentry and other small construction jobs.*

Rooftop gardening

If there are no usable, vacant lots in the neighborhood, it might be decided to establish rooftop gardens, especially if there is a large number of apartment buildings. Permission should be gotten from the building's owner.

Container gardens, in which plants are grown in everything from old Clorox bottles to bushel baskets and even plastic trash bags supported by wire, can produce an amazing amount of vegetables if space is arranged correctly. Another idea might be to construct long, narrow wooden planters, which are easy to assemble and which require only wood (2 x 3's or 2 x 4's in feasible lengths of 8 or 10 feet per box) and nails. These materials can either be bought or solicited from interested community merchants.

It is also possible that there are several apartment residents who are familiar with carpentry and will volunteer their services.

As with lot gardening, the Cooperative Extension has many ideas and resources which it will happily share with groups interested in rooftop gardening. For information see this chapter, "Community vegetable garden."

Tree care

With some 600,000 street trees in New York City and not nearly enough municipal help in caring for them, a group can develop a program to involve older persons in the maintenance of their neighborhood trees.

Some suggestions include:

- Removing glass, garbage, weeds and other refuse from the tree pit on a regular basis.
- Removing wire, signs, chains, string and other foreign objects from tree branches.
- Putting up fences or guards around the trees.
- Cultivating the soil in the tree pits.
- Watering newly planted trees regularly and checking trees when it is hot and dry.
- Keeping pollutants such as oil, gasoline and detergents out of the tree pit.
- Planting ground covers (plants, flowers) in the tree pit.
- Reporting damaged trees to the Division of Forestry and Horticulture, Department of Parks and Recreation.

Michael Cala

To set it up:

- Find out which neighborhood people are interested in maintaining a tree.
- Organize a group so that each tree has one caretaker and efforts are not duplicated. (For example, trees should not be overwatered.)
- Obtain and distribute information on what can be done for a tree and how to do it. Following are some sources of sound horticultural information:

  Write to the **Citizens Committee for New York City, Inc.,** 3 West 29 Street, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10001, or the **Parks Council,** 80 Central Park West, New York, N.Y. 10020, for a copy of the free brochure, *Tree Tips.*

  The Council on the Environment, 51 Chambers Street, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 566-0990) offers technical assistance, has a reference library and tool-lending service.

The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association *sponsors an "Adopt A Tree" program in which residents pick a street tree (by number from a map of trees in the area) and care for it.*

Once the street tree care program in the neighborhood gets underway, try sponsoring a contest for the best kept tree and award the caretaker a watering can or give some other recognition. Publicizing the winner will generate further interest in the program.

The Citizens Committee for New York City *sponsors a cash awards program (SNAP) for outstanding community do-it-yourself projects around the city.*

SNAP's purpose is to "identify, assist and showcase" excellent examples of neighborhood self-help as models for other local groups. Twenty or more cash awards are made during each of four competitions. The maximum grant amount is $1000, but most grants are for $500 or less. Only group projects are eligible, particularly those initiated by grass roots block and civic associations. For further information, write the Citizens Committee *at 3 West 29 Street, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10001 (tel. 578-4747).*

Appendix • 1

- Social Security
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Public Assistance
- Food Stamps
- Medicare and Medicaid
- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Transit reduced fare
- Shopping discount programs
- Information, referral and counseling
- Culture and entertainment

There are literally hundreds of organizations that offer older people the opportunity to take advantage of programs that, for the most part, have been instituted with them in mind.

By no means are all of them listed. Rather, the more comprehensive programs and the larger resource agencies and organizations have been included for easy reference.

Potential applicants to those programs listed under "Supplemental Programs" are advised to telephone the nearest district office before going since each program has different requirements and a phone call will save unnecessary trips. Moreover, applying for some of these programs often involves long waiting times which can be unpleasant. If possible, an applicant should bring a friend or relative along for company and support or he may ask someone to act as his representative if he is unable to go himself.

Booklets dealing with the specifics of each program are available from the library; from the city Department for the Aging (see pp.86-87); the city department that administers the program, and from local members of Congress and many senior centers.

Photo by Anna Kaufman Moon

Since Penelope Noakes of Duppas Hill is gone, there is no one who will ever call me Nellie again.

An old woman

Since eligibility requirements for all programs are constantly changing to reflect cost of living increases or budget cuts, eligibility tables have not been included. It is advisable for potential applicants to contact local offices for that information and to determine what documentation (i.e., birth certificates, rent/utility bills, etc.) will be necessary.

Supplemental programs

Social Security is the old age, survivors and disability insurance program of the federal government. To be eligible for old-age benefits one must have worked at least 40 quarters* (a total of 10 years) in a job covered by Social Security. A retired worker can begin receiving full monthly checks at the age of 65, as can a spouse 65 or older, their dependent children or a divorced wife after 10 years of marriage. Reduced payments can start as early as age 62 for a worker or his or her spouse. (A spouse does not have to have worked in order to receive benefits.) In event of death, the surviving spouse will be paid a lump sum to cover burial costs.

The phone number below should be called for the location of the nearest Social Security office and to find out what documentation will be necessary. The local office has booklets on eligibility and benefits as well as information on how to retrieve lost documents (i.e., birth certificate, marriage license).

Queens
Staten Island
Brooklyn 990-1234
Bronx 794-2000
Manhattan 432-3232

*Social Security will help in researching lost quarters.

Anna Kaufman Moon

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) assures persons 65 and over a minimum of income. They are eligible, whether receiving Social Security benefits or not, if income and assets are below the eligibility levels. Apply at the local Social Security office (for location, call the borough number listed under Social Security). A home interview is available if applicant is infirm, but this must be requested. Persons eligible for SSI are automatically eligible for Medicaid and food stamps, but they must specifically request them. Emergency assistance is available to replace lost or stolen SSI checks and for new

applicants, enabling them to receive funds until they begin regular benefits. To receive emergency assistance an applicant should ask the Social Security case worker for a referral (stating that he is eligible for Emergency Assistance to Adults-EAA) to the welfare center. Without this referral slip, getting emergency assistance is almost impossible. Sometimes the emergency funds have to be repaid.

Persons under the age of 65 may be eligible for **Public Assistance** (Welfare) if their incomes fall within established eligibility guidelines. For more specifics, contact the **Department of Social Services** at 553-5997. Be prepared for a long telephone waiting time.

Food Stamps help people meet the rising cost of food. The latest regulations, which have gone into effect as of January 1, 1979, make all food stamps free.

The size of a household unit, in addition to its yearly income and expenses, determines the dollar value of individual allotments. Rather than listing individual requirements here, it is advisable that all interested persons apply for food stamps to determine individual eligibility, as guidelines are subject to change.

Welfare and SSI recipients are *no longer automatically eligible* to receive food stamps, but must apply for them. For information on food stamps, necessary doçumentation, or to receive an application, call either 929-8800 or the toll-free 800-342-3710 number for the nearest food stamp center. One food stamp center in each of the 5 boroughs is open until 9:00 p.m. nightly as well as from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Either of the above two numbers will supply specific addresses.

In addition to food stamp centers, local agencies such as neighborhood houses, the public libraries and senior centers distribute food stamp applications and will assist in their preparation. A personal interview with either a household member or his or her representative is required at a food stamp center. Older or disabled people can request a Homebound or Outstationed certification by calling 554-8176 for residents of Manhattan and the Bronx, or 554-8177 for Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island residents.

Recertification for continued eligibility is done yearly.

Regardless of income, all persons 65 and over who qualify for Social Security or certain disability benefits are eligible for **Medicare**. Those working and not collecting Social Security benefits, although eligible, may still receive Medicare. Persons 65 and over who are not eligible for Social Security may nevertheless buy Medicare coverage.

Medicare is comprised of two parts: Part A, which includes hospitalization and ancillary costs, and Part B, which is medical insurance.

Part A offers free hospitalization coverage if the applicant qualifies for, or is receiving, Social Security benefits. In addition to hospital room costs, Part A also absorbs the costs of laboratory tests, X-rays, operating room costs and some rehabilitation and skilled nursing care while in the hospital. It also *partially* covers post-hospitalization care, including skilled nursing facility care, rehabilitation and some home health care services.

Part B is concerned with medical insurance. It is free to all SSI beneficiaries, but costs everyone else a monthly sum, which is $7.60 as of July, 1977. Part B covers a portion of doctor and surgical in-hospital fees, outpatient clinical fees, nursing facilities or office visits. It also partially covers diagnostic testing, ambulance use, special medical equipment (walkers, wheelchairs, trusses, artificial limbs, post-cataract operation eyeglasses and pacemakers, among others) and some home health care that does not follow a hospital stay, such as physical or speech therapy or part-time skilled nursing care.

Applications for Medicare should be made about three months before the applicant's 65th birthday so that coverage will begin on time. Applications should be made in person at the local Social Security office. If the applicant is over 65 when applying, application forms are accepted between January 31 and March 1 *only*. For every year of delay in applying beyond age 65, there is a 10 per cent increase in premium cost for Part B coverage.

Documents that are needed for application include a birth certificate and a Social Security card. The Social Security office has information booklets on Medicare and its coverage.

Medicaid is a medical assistance program for people whose

incomes—regardless of age—do not allow them to meet medical costs. Medicaid pays the doctor, hospital and pharmacy directly; it does not reimburse the patient. It will cover all medical costs which Medicare does not plus the yearly Medicare deductibles (deductibles are those initial costs which the patient must pay before Medicare begins absorbing the remainder).

Medicaid payments are made according to a defined schedule. The doctor and pharmacist have to agree to accept Medicaid before services are rendered.

Medicaid will pay for psychiatric, podiatric and optometric services in hospitals, offices, clinics and skilled nursing facilities. It will also cover rehabilitation services and approved home care, ambulance and ambulette services, prescription drugs, surgical appliances, eyeglasses, oxygen, some dental work, prescribed hearing aids and orthopedic shoes. Approved care in outpatient clinics, nursing homes, health related facilities and hospitals are also covered.

All SSI and Welfare recipients automatically receive Medicaid. Persons not eligible for SSI because either income or assets are over required limits, may still be eligible for Medicaid if

There is a wicked inclination in most people to suppose an old man decayed in his intellects. If a young or middle-aged man, when leaving a company, does not recollect where he laid his hat, it is nothing; but if the same inattention is discovered in an old man, people will shrug up their shoulders and say, "His memory is going."

Samuel Johnson

Michael Cala

those assets fall within eligibility guidelines or if medical bills are high. They may also be eligible for Medicaid's **Monthly Surplus Program** (MSP). After applying and being rejected for the regular Medicaid benefits, applicants should take the letter of rejection, which states the amount of surplus income, plus the paid monthly medical bills equal to or greater than the amount of surplus income, to the Medicaid office for an interview to determine eligibility for the MSP program.

To apply, contact the **Bureau of Medical Assistance,** 340 West 34 Street, New York, N.Y. 10001 (tel. 594-3050).

To ease the burden of processing applications and long waiting times, many community agencies, senior centers and OCIM offices will provide application forms, assist in their preparation, supply a list of needed documents and make arrangements for the personal interview.

If an applicant is homebound, OCIM—the Office of Case Intake and Management—will arrange for a home interview. Hospital social services offices will interview hospitalized patients for Medicaid.

Housing

Applications for public housing are available by mail or in person from the **New York City Housing Authority,** 5 Park Place, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 233-8878) and at the management offices of all developments. There are very long waiting lists for admittance.

Senior citizen rent increase exemptions apply to persons 62 or over who are heads of households (the spouse can be younger). Income levels are set at $6,500 a year or less for persons who spend at least one-third of their monthly income on rent, live in rent-controlled, rent-stabilized or Mitchell-Lama apartments or stabilized hotel rooms. Welfare recipients and those who live in private houses are not eligible; SSI recipients are.

To apply, send a postcard requesting a rent increase exemption form to whichever of these two addresses is appropriate. If living in a rent-controlled apartment, the renter must apply before or within 90 days of an increase notice. In a rent-stabilized apartment, the renter must apply upon receipt of the renewal lease or notice of increase.

For Rent-Controlled Apartments:
Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Unit
Office of Rent Control
110 Church Street, New York, N.Y.10007 (tel. 566-5412).

For Rent-Stabilized Apartments and Hotel Rooms:
New York City Conciliation and Appeals Board
666 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.10019 (tel. 265-5105).

Or: The Department for the Aging or a district Rent Office

Note: A rent increase exemption can be moved with a tenant to a new apartment if it is rent-stabilized.

The new **Section 8 Housing Assistance Program** is administered by the New York City Housing Authority. It enables lower-income aged, disabled persons or families to rent a more expensive apartment. Under this program the Housing Authority will make monthly payments to a landlord on behalf of an eligible tenant. The payments will amount to the difference between the rent that the tenant can afford to pay for the apartment (based on regulations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development) and the full rent for the apartment.

To be eligible a person must be 62 years of age or over, or disabled. The person can reside anywhere in the city, but the Housing Authority will approve the lease and inspect the apartment to determine that it meets required standards. The landlord must also agree to be part of the program.

To obtain an application, visit the **Application Information Section,** New York City Housing Authority, 5 Park Place, New York, N.Y. 10007, or write to: **Leased Housing Division,** N.Y.C. Housing Authority, 250 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007.

Real property tax reductions allow persons over 65 (spouse may be younger) discounted real property taxes if they meet the guidelines criteria. To apply, call the Real Property Assessment Bureau for an application form. Applications can only be filed between February 1 and March 15.

Manhattan 566-3400
Bronx . . . . . 294-0800 (ext. 42-3-4)
Brooklyn 643-5957
Queens 658-4626
Staten Island 390-5292

Employment

Federation Employment and Guidance Service, 215 Park Avenue South, between 17th and 18th Streets, New York, N.Y., offers employment opportunities, a guidance service, clerical training and rehabilitation programs. No fee for placement, but a fee based on ability to pay is charged for vocational counseling. Open Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call 777-4900 for an appointment.

Mature Temps, Inc., 1114 Avenue of the Americas, between 42nd and 43rd Streets, 27th Floor (tel. 869-0740), provides older people with temporary employment in clerical, bookkeeping and secretarial positions.

PATH, 154 West 14 Street, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y., is a training and placement service for home health care workers, companions and housekeepers. Also offers general job placement. Low income adults age 55 and over are eligible for its services. PATH also holds clerical brush-up workshops and homemaker training sessions that teach handicapped and/or disabled people to care for themselves. In the fall of 1977, PATH plans to start a New Directions Workshop geared to housewives entering the job market and retired individuals who wish to begin new careers. A low fee will be charged. Call 242-5700 for an interview.

Senior Companion Program, in which older adults visit and assist isolated and homebound elderly persons, is sponsored by United Neighborhood Houses. Companions receive a yearly stipend of $1,670, a daily meal and a free annual medical checkup for 20 hours of work a week. The program operates out of 12 settlement houses. To qualify, persons must be 60 years and older with a maximum income of $3,157 for a single person, $4,107 for a couple. To apply write to: Senior Companion Program, United Neighborhood Houses, 101 East 15 Street, New York, N.Y. 10003 (tel 677-0300).

Steven Goldgram

State of New York, Department of Labor has a counseling service for older people in addition to offering some employment opportunities for office work only. Offices are at Two World Trade Center. Call 488-5510 first before visiting.

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Foster Grandparents, 280 Broadway, New York, N.Y., is a program operated by the City Department for the Aging. It gives stipends to a limited number of low-income older adults who serve four hours a day, five days a week as substitute grandparents at various institutions serving children. Foster grandfathers are particularly needed. Call Marcia Vogel at 577-0371. If there are no positions open now, ask to be put on the waiting list.

The Elder Craftsmen Showcase, 850 Lexington Avenue,, near 64th Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 535-8030), sells high quality merchandise made by people 60 and over. Anyone can bring in work to be screened for sale in the store. Craftsmen receive 65 per cent of sale price (which is jointly determined). Also provides free crafts workshops to senior citizen groups and/or representatives of such groups. Call 861-5260 for information.

Education

There are many formal educational programs an older adult can take advantage of. A partial list follows. Informal local classes are offered at most senior centers. Graduate students, professionals and artisans frequently hold classes at such centers in history, psychology, bible study, crafts, painting, dance, etc.

Educational opportunities such as high school equivalency, basic education, English as a second language and specific trades courses geared to future employment are all taught free of charge in many public schools throughout the city. For information write: **The Adult Coordinating Unit,** 347 Baltic Street, Brooklyn N.Y. 11201(tel. 596-4402) or call the local high school.

Board of Education, City of New York, Office of Continuing Education offers day, evening and Saturday classes in English as a second language, high school equivalency exam preparation, pre-high school equivalency, adult basic education, citizen preparation and arts and crafts courses. Call 596-3903 or write: 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

Most colleges offer tuition reductions to older adults as well as specific classes geared to older people. New

York University offers a 50 per cent tuition reduction to people over 62 for all courses offered at the university.

The Bronx Community College Center for Aging, 120 East 184 Street, Bronx, N.Y. 10468 (tel. 367-5972), offers college courses on and off campus in all educational fields and assistance in course registration. Also gives recreational classes of interest to older people.

The Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College gives eight-week courses in conjunction with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Courses are $25 each. For more information and to be included on their mailing list, call the Center at 570-5093. All classes are given at 129 East 79 Street, New York, N.Y..

The City University of New York, under its free tuition program, enables New York City residents 65 and over to enroll in all college courses at any CUNY branch on a space-availability basis. For a nominal one-time application fee of about $20 and a registration fee of $25, an applicant may take 10½ credits per semester at no charge. When applying, two proof-of-age documents must be shown. Call 570-5222 for course and tuition information.

Fordham University College-At-60 Program offers seminars and many tuition grants plus free weekly lecture series and personal growth programs to persons over 50. Upon completion of four 2-credit seminars, applicants can be admitted to the *Excel* Program or the Liberal Arts College. Call Fordham University at Lincoln Center, West 60 Street and Columbus Avenue, New York, N.Y. (tel. 956-3797).

New School Institute for Retired Professionals, 66 West 12 Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 741-5682), is a continuing educational program developed by retirees and the university. For an annual fee of $225, an Institute member may enroll in one New School Adult Division course each semester and participate in all phases of the IRP program.

St. John's University, Grand Central and Utopia Parkways, Jamaica, N.Y. 11439 (tel. 969-8000), entitles older adults to free attendance at all university courses upon application to the dean and a one-time initial fee of $25.

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New York City Community College, 300 Jay Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 (tel. 643-8150), sponsors the Institute of Study for Older Adults for those 60 and over. It consists of educational courses and an annual conference on older adult education. Some classes combine younger as well as older students for an intergenerational focus. Open admission is on a space-availability basis.

Elderhostel, the New England Center for Continuing Education, 15 Garrison Avenue, Durham, New Hampshire 03824, enables people 60 and over to live in college dormitories while auditing college courses. Tuition is free, the person paying only for room and board and transportation. Minimum stay is one week.

Senior citizen reduced fare card

Persons 65 or over, not working full time and who live in one of the five boroughs of New York City are eligible for the

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reduced fare card. As of October 1, 1978, half-fare cards have been honored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for a trial period of 6 months. Subway fare is 50¢ with a free return ticket valid for three days. Bus fare is 25¢, and transfers are available for 10¢. Consult any senior center or most branches of the public libraries for an application or call the **Department for the Aging,** 280 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007 (tel. 577-0819), for the nearest location.

Reduced fares are also available to those with ambulatory or manual disabilities. Write: **Reduced Fare for the Handicapped,** 280 Broadway, Room 704, New York, N.Y. 10007, or call 433-5265 for an application.

Shopping discount program

This program helps to ease the effects of inflation among older citizens living on fixed incomes. Volunteers encourage local merchants to offer special discounts for these people. The merchants post notices to advertise their participation in the program and the group informs older people of participating stores. This project is very easy to set up and offers benefits to both older adults and the merchants involved.

To set it up:

- Recruit volunteers to solicit merchant participation and to handle publicity.
- Establish a phone number and choose a person to coordinate the group's efforts. Volunteers should first approach the owners of the stores they themselves shop in. As the group grows, volunteers can be assigned geographical areas for canvassing.
- Encourage all merchants in the area to participate, but concentrate on those stores that offer basic services and goods to older people: drug stores, supermarkets, shoe stores, apparel shops, dry cleaning stores, movies, fabric shops, hardware stores and repair shops.
- Discuss the discount program with merchants. Point out that participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time. Explain that each merchant can decide upon a discount service tailored to his own needs. Discounts average 10 per cent and can range from 5 to 25 per cent. Each merchant decides

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how much the discount will be and can set conditions.

- A New York City Reduced Fare card, a Medicare card or other proof of age will identify the older adult.
- Publicize the names of participating stores and the nature of their discounts in flyers or newsletters distributed to senior centers, churches or community groups. Ask the local newspaper to publish the list as a public service. List the stores according to categories and alphabetically: apparel, beauty salon, stationery. Be sure that merchants receive copies so that they are aware of the publicity they are receiving.
- Participating stores should be canvassed regularly, every month or two, to identify establishments which have gone out of business or where ownership has changed in order to keep lists of participating stores up to date. Volunteers should take this opportunity to discuss with the merchants any problems they are having with the program.

Neighborhood stores usually post signs in their windows to advertise that they are cooperating in the program.

Community Concern for Senior Citizens *has extensive experience with this type of program. It has published a list of stores in each borough that offer discounts to older people. Write to: Maria Redo, Community Concern for Senior Citizens, 415 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017 (tel. 688-4991). Open Mon. to Thurs. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This borough listing is also available through the* New York City Department for the Aging. *Call, write or visit 250 Broadway, 30th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10007. Their telephone number is 577-0800.*

Community Agency for Senior Citizens *(CASC), sponsored by the Community Service Society, has a discount program on Staten Island. Adults 62 and over who are fully or partly retired are eligible. A $2 fee is charged for a lifetime membership card or a proxy card (people who are unable to shop for themselves can designate two other people to shop for them and still be eligible for the discount). About 450 businesses in Staten Island give discounts to people through this program. For more information call Chuck Boardman at 981-6226.*

Information, referral and counseling

Catholic Charities gives counseling, runs senior clubs in churches, has escort and homemaker services, etc. For Bronx Manhattan and Staten Island Catholic Charities call 371-1000. In Brooklyn . . . 596-5500 and Queens . . . 738-2500.

Federation of Jewish Philanthropies (Social Service Department) offers information and referrals to hospitals and medical care, homes for the aged, family and vocational services, counseling, homemaking, community centers and camps. Call 751-1000, ext. 236.

Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies has a network of 300 voluntary, not-for-profit welfare and health organizations. Gives information, referrals and is an excellent source on the preparation of wills. Call 777-4800.

Jewish Association for Services to the Aged (JASA) operates senior citizen clubs and centers (including hot lunch programs), provides counseling, referrals, home visits, apartment relocation, all social family work and vocational services, health and medical service and legal aid.

Call: **Manhattan** (main office)
and Staten Island 677-2530
Bronx 365-4044
Queens 263-4700
Brooklyn 693-7606

Each borough office will have a list of neighborhood offices.

Michael Cala

United Neighborhood Houses of New York offers information and referrals, family and vocational services, counseling; has over 35 neighborhood settlement houses, directs city-wide companion and telephone reassurance programs (tel. 677-0300).

Vacations and Senior Centers Association, Inc. (VASCA) helps older people to find the nearest and most compatible senior center for them and also provides backup technical assistance to senior center staff. VASCA is also involved in lobbying and in expert testimony for cases involving better conditions for senior centers. VASCA also sponsors summer camp vacations on a sliding fee scale to older people. For more information, call Irma Mingus at 777-5000.

N.Y.C. Department for the Aging gives information and

referral on all city-run programs for older people including hot lunch programs. Call or visit:

Central Office 577-0800
250 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007
Brooklyn 855-1208
66 Court Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
West Bronx 992-0155
153 E. 170 Street
Bronx, N.Y. 10452
Pelham Parkway, Bronx 931-9192
2141 Barnes Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10462
East Side, Manhattan 759-3870
415 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10020
West Side, Manhattan 666-4142
207 W. 94 Street
New York, N.Y. 10025
Harlem, Manhattan 663-3874
215 W. 125 Street
New York, N.Y. 10027
Queens 544-1265
70-50 Austin Street
Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375
Staten Island 981-1680
Administrative Office Bldg.
St. George Terminal
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301

Sex counseling

Older people are led to believe that to have sexual feelings after middle age is "foolish" and "abnormal." This cultural myth is reinforced by ignorant doctors, children of older people and the broadcast media, but has no basis in actual physiology.

There have been many, many documented cases of men and women in their eighties and even nineties continuing to enjoy the warmth of sexual love; indeed, there is no reason for anyone to stop feeling sexual simply because people—mostly younger ones, to be sure—think that it is inappropriate.

The reasons usually cited—threat of heart attack, for example—are more an extension of the advice-giver's hangups than actual fact. The problems that usually do crop up in later life—reduced potency in males, loss of lubricative secretion in females—are easily remedied.

The seemingly insurmountable problems that older people have concerning sex are usually rooted in guilt feelings about having sex. In men, this psychological guilt is the main reason for loss of potency; women usually refrain for the same reasons.

This guilt has lately spurred much research into the problem and there are many agencies that offer qualified sex counseling, both physiological and psychological, for the asking.

Following are some of the major sex information and referral agencies that deal particularly with sexual problems of the older adult. The premise of all of these organizations is that "sex after sixty" is as normal as sexual activity in younger people.

Community Sex Information, Inc. maintains a sex information hotline and referral service which operates from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday (tel. 677-3320).

Manhattan **Human Sexuality Program** is run under the auspices of Mt. Sinai Hospital, offering sexual counseling to people on a sliding scale fee basis (tel. 650-6634).

Brooklyn **Downstate Medical Center, Sex Therapy Unit,** 450 Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11203, offers sex therapy by qualified professionals on a sliding scale fee basis. Will also provide a staff member to speak to groups on sex topics (tel. 270-2576).

Queens **Hillside Hospital Outpatient Program** provides sex counseling and referral on a fee basis (tel. 470-4284).

Bronx **Albert Einstein** offers sex counseling on a fee basis (tel. 430-3404).

Services to Battered Wives

Beatings, abuse, psychological terror . . . these are certainly not the components of matrimonial bliss. Yet for thousands of women in New York City alone, regular beatings from their husbands are a staple of their relationships which, until recently, has been shuttered behind closed doors.

The battered wife syndrome knows no age barriers, income levels or lifestyles. The middle class Westchester wife of 28

who's been married three years lives in as much fear and endures as much physical abuse as the 65-year-old Lower East Side woman who believes the beatings of the past 30 years are some type of personal cross that she must bear.

Women of all ages are fearful for themselves and their children, yet because many have no jobs or their own money they continue to exist as objects for their husbands' attacks. Others are embarrassed to discuss the matter or may even deny it exists.

To assist women who have been the victims of violence inflicted by their mates, following is a list of help centers geared specifically to battered wives. Some provide shelter as well as counseling.

Borough Crisis Centers have no shelter facilities but offer counseling and intervention to abused women, children and rape victims, 24 hours a day. Seriously injured may be hospitalized.

Queens Hospital Center 990-3188
Harlem Hospital 621-3403
Lincoln Hospital (Bronx) 579-5326
Kings County Hospital 630-4688
(Brooklyn)

Manhattan **City of New York Emergency Shelter,** 241 Church Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 334-5241). Open 24 hours; offers one-night emergency shelter.

Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), telephone hot-line (686-1676) 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. weekdays. Provides shelter referral, group, individual and career counseling and legal advocacy.

Brooklyn **Women's Survival Space,** hotline (439-7281) from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Shelter, counseling, welfare and legal advocacy.

Children and Youth Development Services in the Park Slope section (tel. 788-4800). Counseling and short term emergency shelter in homes of local residents.

Queens **All the Queens Women** operates a help line (tel. 359-9204) from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. six days a week, also noon to 4:00 p.m. Sunday. Legal advocacy and counseling.

Culture and entertainment

All governmental agencies will supply printed information and speakers to community groups. New York City's Department for the Aging provides speakers on topics of interest to older adults which are both educational and entertaining. Singers, comedians, dancers are also available. Requests should be made in writing to the Commissioner, **New York City Department for the Aging,** 250 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007. Requests should include suggested topic, date (and alternative) and the name of the group.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the **Retired Senior Volunteer Program** (R.S.V.P.) have trained a group of older adults to give lectures and slide presentations on various exhibits at the Met (examples Van Gogh, Old New York). To arrange for a speaker call the Department of Community Programs at 879-5500, ext. 561 or 666.

Theater, Concerts, Movies, Museums and Sports

The Times Square Ticket Center at Broadway and 47th Street in Manhattan sells theater tickets at half price on the day of the performance (tel. 354-5800). Ticket availability will depend on the show and the day visited. There are long lines on weekends.

Town Hall, 123 West 43 Street, New York, N.Y. (tel. 582-2424), has special concert tickets half-priced for older people and has a mailing list.

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Theater Development Fund (TDF) offers a chance to attend dramatic, dance or musical programs at great reductions. TDF has two voucher programs: a theater voucher program for Off-Off Broadway productions and a dance voucher program. Interested persons should write to TDF, 1564 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036, requesting an application for either the theater or the dance vouchers. Vouchers from TDF are purchased at reduced prices and presented at the box office for admission to the included programs.

The New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West (at 77th Street) in Manhattan, has concerts every Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at a discount price of 50¢ for older adults. Films and tours are scheduled for groups by appointment. Call 873-3400 and ask for the Education Department.

Madison Square Garden offers a variety of events throughout the year and has special group sale and senior citizen prices for some events. Call 563-8080 for information.

Movies Discounts for older persons are available at most chains (Loew's, RKO, United Artists, Interboro, Rugoff, Walter Reade and Century) which offer discount cards. The amount of the discount varies.

Museums Virtually all museums have discount admission fees or are free for older people. Call the specific museum and inquire. Some museums that are free to older adults are:

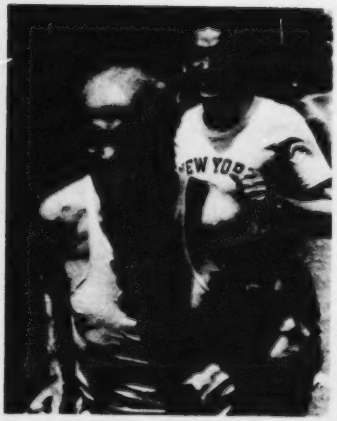
Museum of the City of New York
Fifth Avenue & 103 Street
New York, N.Y. (tel. 534-1672)

Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fifth Avenue & 82 Street
New York, N.Y. (free weekdays)

The Guggenheim Museum
Fifth Avenue & 89 Street
New York, N.Y. has a 75¢ admission charge for those over 62. On Tuesday from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. admission is free. Tel. 860-1313 for information.

The Jewish Museum
Fifth Avenue at 92 Street
New York, N.Y. has a pay-what-you-wish admission charge for older adults (tel. 860-1888).

The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street
New York, N.Y. has a 75¢ admission for older adults (tel. 956-6100).



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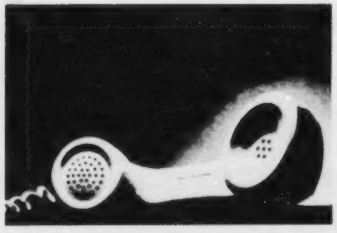
Sports *The New York Yankees* regularly schedule special Senior Citizen Days which offer reduced admission to older people upon presentation of a reduced fare card. Call 293-4300. Tickets must be purchased the day of the game at the stadium.

In other boroughs, contact the local Borough Office for the Aging for a list of theaters, institutions and other organizations offering discounts.

Appendix • 2
Important phone numbers

Police emergency • **911**
For local precinct number and Senior Citizen
Robbery Unit borough number • **374-6700**
Fire and ambulance • **911** or operator
Building and heating complaints • **960-4800**
Consumer complaints • **964-7777**
Citywide Crime Prevention Program • **874-0724**
Crime Victim Assistance Center (Bronx) • **798-4200**
Con Edison emergency numbers • **683-8830** (Manhattan)
• **665-7615** (Brooklyn)
• **596-8250** (Bronx)
• **463-1800** (Queens)
• **727-4600** (Staten Island)
Gas leaks • **643-4050** (for Brooklyn Union areas, 24 hours; in other areas, call Con Ed numbers above)
Health Department information • **566-8237**
Noise complaints • **966-7500**
Park Department complaints • **472-1003**
Phone company complaints • **488-5330**
Rent control information • **566-7970**
Crisis problems (depression) • **462-3322**
• **736-6191**
Dial-A-Shoulder (round the clock) • **532-2400**
Welfare emergency information (24 hours) • **344-5241**
Doctors' phone referral (will locate a doctor in caller's borough who will charge $40 for an emergency visit
• **879-1000** (Manhattan)
• **328-1000** (Bronx)
• **771-8800** (Brooklyn)
• **268-7300** (Queens)
• **351-3600** (Staten Island-after 6 p.m.)



Important phone numbers

Drug store emergency delivery • **755-2266** (Manhattan)
(delivery by taxi; customer must pay fare)
• **768-0600** (Brooklyn)
(Fifth Avenue & 9th Street; will deliver in 10-block radius 24 hours)
• **911** (Bronx, Queens and Staten Island)

Visiting Nurse Association • **535-1100** (Manhattan, Bronx and Queens)
• **636-7570** (Brooklyn)
• **442-8480** (Staten Island)

Poison emergency and information • **340-4494**

Overnight shelter • **460-8837** (Men)
• **460-1176** (Women)

Department for the Aging • **577-0800** (Central Office)
• **855-1208** (Brooklyn)
• **992-0155** (West Bronx)
• **931-9192** (Pelham Parkway)
• **759-3870** (East Side, Manhattan)
• **666-4142** (West Side, Manhattan)
• **663-3874** (Harlem)
• **544-1265** (Queens)
• **981-1680** (Staten Island)

Discrimination complaints • **566-5050** (Human Rights Commission)

Bank, credit company, check-cashing complaints • **488-2337**

Insurance company complaints • **488-5642**

Auto dealers • **488-4319** (Attorney General's office)

Potholes • **964-2110** (24 hours)

Air pollution • **966-7500**

Legal assistance • **682-0606**

Mail theft and fraud • **971-7851** • **971-5762**

Sanitation complaints • **925-2310**

Important phone numbers

The Older Person's Service of the Community Service Society, 105 East 22 Street, New York, N.Y. 10010, offers free counseling to people 60 and over and their relatives for both chronic and emergency problems. Call 254-8900.

The Community Service Society provides immediate financial aid to older crime victims found ineligible for City or State emergency help or those who are awaiting SSI benefits. Call the following numbers:

- **254-8900** (Manhattan)
- **462-5300** (Brooklyn)
- **731-8761** (Bronx)
- **657-6500** (Queens)
- **981-6226** (Staten Island)

Michael Gallo